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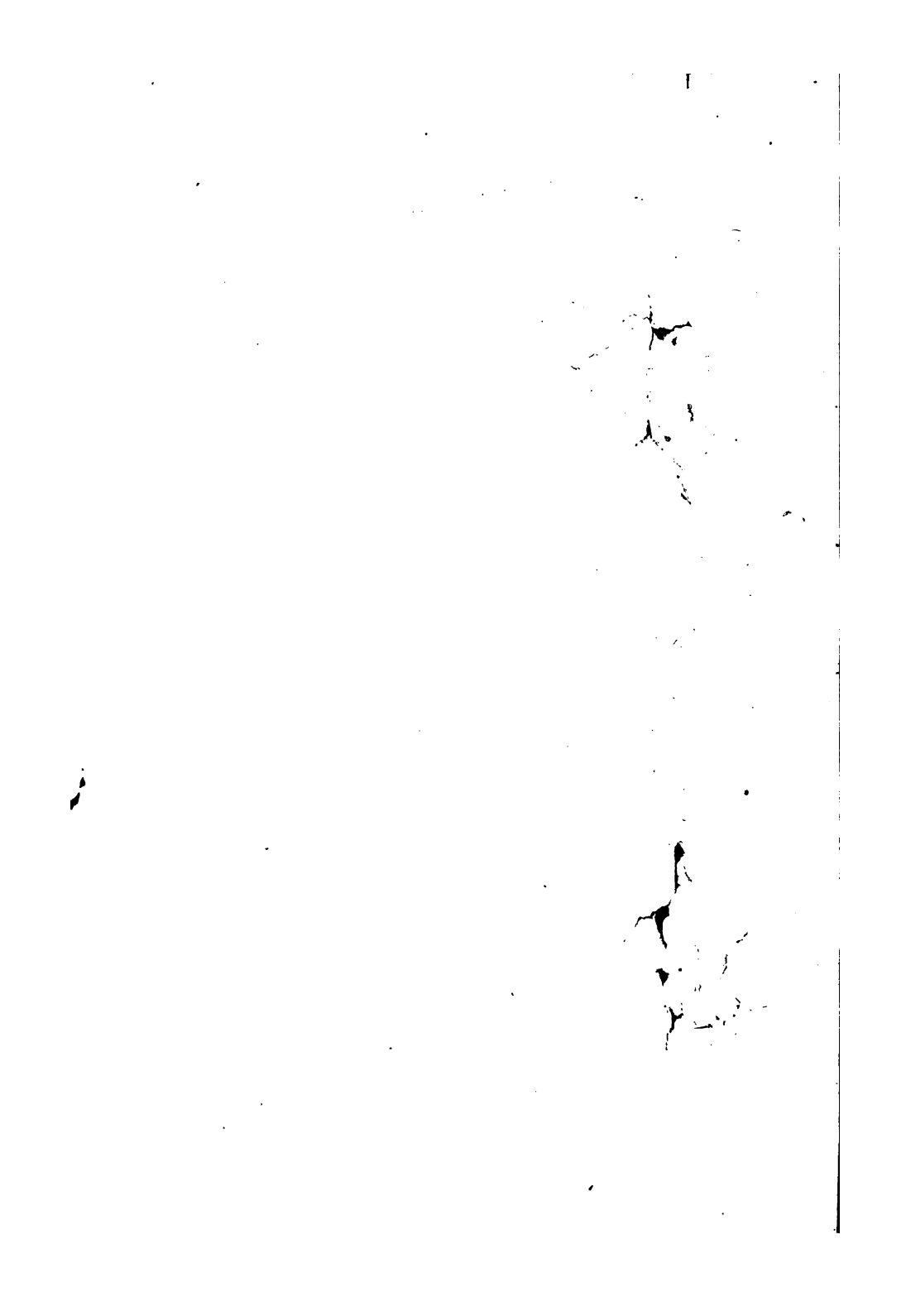
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OUTCOMES OF OLD OXFORD



OUTCOMES OF OLD OXFORD

BY THE

REV. W. K. R. BEDFORD

*Author of 'Blazon of Episcopacy,' 'Annals of
Free Foresters,' 'Rowing at Westminster,' etc.*

'In truth but shadows of fact, verisimilitudes not
verities—upon the remote edges and outskirts of
history.'

CHARLES LAMB.

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INTRODUCTION.

‘Why do you write always about your successful contemporaries? I am sure that the men who have gone to grief are much more interesting people, and the scenes in which they have figured far more picturesque.’

So said my clever hostess, whose husband had just passed a kind comment upon certain sketches of old friends from my pen which had recently seen the light.

‘Because,’ was my reply, ‘I dare not hand down to public scorn the faults and failings of men who have gone under. There are incidents in one’s own career in the past which one would fain forget, and it would add an intolerable bitterness to death to think that some prentice hand was planning to record the skeleton in your chamber for the diversion of the thoughtless atoms who make up in the aggregate the reading public.’

‘But,’ returned my fair advocate, ‘there is no

necessity for real names at all. The world can hardly be likely to care for them, especially as it does not know them. What I want you to give us are episodes in the lives of men whose eccentricity has warped their talent, or whose want of ballast has wrecked them on strange coasts where the manners and customs of the aborigines are striking from their very barbarity. Truth is stranger than fiction, and I am sure that you have seen and heard much which has only to be simply told to provoke mirth or insinuate melancholy. Fun and pathos lie very near together, and a sketch or two of the scenes in which you have borne a part may contain the elements of both.'

'You forget,' pleaded I, 'my ineradicable slovenliness of style. I cannot write dialogue or weave a plot.'

'Granted,' interposed the voice of Peregrine Argus, caricaturist and critic, who was sitting by; 'and do not try to refine too much. In a history of the miscellaneous adventures which befall an individual in the course of life, we do not expect a regular and concerted drama, where every step brings us nearer to the final catastrophe. You may take heart of grace when you remember that the greatest of novelists said, "If others do it in a better style, I do it more naturally."' '

'The wife is right,' said my host; 'some of those

anecdotes of Oxford days which you have been telling us, connected, as they easily might be, with the true history of men whose career, though unfortunate, has been eventful, would appeal to the sense of humour which lurks in the least likely reader, and hundreds, if less appreciative than I and my lady will be, are sure at any rate to find something to their taste in such a tale.'

Her ladyship's word was law, and in the sketches which follow I have tried to draw on my recollection of real characters and actual occurrences, to make my heroes representative not of a single model, but of the peculiarities of various acquaintance, and to describe real events, though not perhaps in the precise connection in which they occurred. If I have used the language of unbated Toryism, that, too, is characteristic of the days into which I have translated myself, days of boyish generalities and eager partisanship.

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MR. WADHAM OF WORCESTER.

THE first few weeks of an undergraduate's life at Oxford are often a crisis of supreme importance to his future career. Up to the moment of his becoming a member of the University, and tenancing an independent domicile of his own, the supervision of the parent or the pedagogue has kept him in a chrysalis

or cocoon state of existence, and into what he is to develop, butterfly or grub, drone or worker, is now to be determined in no small measure by the accidental associations of the period of nonage into which his college life introduces him. This isolation is less frequently the rule now than in the days of my youth, for almost every boy comes up from a public school with old alumni expecting him, and ready to look after him if he is good for anything at all, and with the college authorities prepared to make a far more thorough and far more judicious provision for the mental and bodily wants of the freshman than was the wont of the don of my time, who, with some few honourable exceptions, seemed to regard the junior member of the University as an indispensable misfortune, to be severely ignored as far as possible, until coercion became absolutely necessary. Even in such matters as ordinary sanitation and daily decency the arrangements in not a few of the best colleges were indescribably rude and filthy, and while considerable laxity in regard to personal expenditure was tolerated, the tutorial ideal was a menage of Spartan economy, one of the consequences being a greater dependence upon the men lodged in close proximity, than the Oxford man of the present age, with his 'common room' and many other elaborate provisions for his daily convenience, can possibly imagine.

Even in so good a college as B. N. C., where the accommodation at the present day is somewhat limited, the overcrowding was such that occasionally a late-comer was informed that he must submit to be billeted upon another man, whose set of rooms embraced two sleeping apartments, of which the second probably bore more resemblance to the misnamed 'state-room' of a passenger steamer, or the box-bed in a Scottish 'landward town,' than to the ordinary bedchamber of English homes.

This, considerably to my disgust, I found was to be my fate when I entered at Brasenose in the forties, and had I not been lucky in my 'chum,' I should have been supremely miserable. But it was happily my lot to be inflicted upon one of the best fellows in college, the man who steered our boat, and, not only for that reason, but for other gifts and graces, was the favourite of the whole community, as was evidenced by his being always known by the sobriquet of 'Palinurus,' shortened in general parlance to 'Pal.' It was firmly believed in college that on the occasion of a dinner-party at the Principal's, the stately lady who was our distinguished chief's better half and the aunt of an Earl (a fact which she never forgot) addressed him with ceremonious politeness as Mr. Pal, and certainly scouts and porters were not unusually caught tripping, when a note or a parcel came, 'With

Mr. Pal—I beg pardon, Mr. Hardy's compliments, sir.' What a wealth of affection and regard Englishmen can express by a familiar nickname! 'Queen Bess' and 'Charlie over the water' are the sublimated essence of expression of attachment to constitutional monarchy and hereditary right; nor would Palmerston and Beaconsfield have had the hold upon the popular sympathy, which they above all Englishmen of this century maintained, had one not been 'Pam' and the other 'Dizzy' to the million. One of the shrewdest observers I ever knew once said to me, 'For popularity there is nothing like coming out with your nickname ready made.'

Hardy was not a beauty, but though light enough to handle the rudder-lines, his frame was all brawn and muscle. He had once done a three days' tramp in the Highlands barefooted, when a blow on his ankle had rendered the touch of boot or shoe intolerable; and, quiet fellow as he was, he was a quick and handy boxer, a form of athletics cultivated in those days by a very different class of men from the Pelicans of 1890.

*'Ingenuas (pugni) didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores'*

was the motto of many a steady student of the classics, and blackguard as the associations of the 'ring' might have been then, they had not touched

that level of contamination which degrades them in the present day. 'Ah, sir,' said one of the old school of fighting-men to a favourite pupil whom he recognised in the ranks of the special constables on the memorable tenth of April, 1848, 'but I'm sorry you have that paltry bit of stick in your hand. I'd like to see you give those rascals your beautiful upper cut.' And the perplexed dismay upon the face of a very decorous friend of ours was highly comic when he saw Hardy enter a railway-carriage on the first day of the vacation with certain flimsy-papered parcels, very foreign to the ordinary impedimenta of an undergraduate's travelling gear, and was informed, in reply to his inquiry what they were, that as Palinurus was going to spend a few days in London, he thought he would take some toys to Ben Caunt's children, the aforesaid Caunt being a gigantic gladiator who kept a tavern in St. Martin's Lane. As this fancy of my host's was not without its bearing on the circumstances which led to my acquaintance with Mr. Wadham, I will not apologize for the apparent digression.

It was alleged as a cause, but more accurately speaking was a consequence, of this partiality for fisticuffs, that a smouldering feud between town and gown, citizens and students (a survival, perhaps, of the great intestine combat of 1368), was annually fanned into activity in the November term. There

were always in Oxford a fair number of loafers of the hand-to-mouth description, who picked up a precarious livelihood upon the outskirts of the University, whose familiarity with its members had, in accordance with the proverb, bred contempt. There were also the descendants of Democritus Burton's bargemen (whose converse that cynic philosopher found the best antidote to his daily melancholy), sturdy knaves with fists as ready as their tongues. A conflict with these warriors was regarded by votaries of the cestus among the undergraduates much as the knights-errant of old esteemed encounters with giants and dragons, or as Crusaders strove for distinction against the paynim. For some not very easily intelligible reason, the city magistrates permitted Wombwell's menagerie, after attending a statute fair in a neighbouring town, to establish itself on Gloucester Green, a plot of ground described generally by collegians as 'in the slums,' and more particularly defined as the 'latter end of nowhere.' Here many a *combat à l'outrance* was waged, sometimes with Nature's weapons only, but occasionally with sticks and stones; the engagement often resolving itself into a series of skirmishes of a triangular character throughout the streets of Oxford, the proctors' bulldogs and the city police being sometimes assailed by one party, sometimes by both, as they strove to reduce the more

dangerous components of the throng to the outward semblance of order. A certain pathos and dignity, however, is lent to these scuffles, when we remember how large a proportion of the actors in them, of both orders, volunteered into the army during the Crimean campaign, where officers and men alike left their bones on the heights of Inkerman, or within the bloodstained redoubts of the Redan.

But few days had elapsed in my new quarters, and term had just fairly got into full swing, when, having retired to my den one night a little earlier than usual, after a fatiguing effort in the weighty tub of a boat which served the neophytes as their introduction to the river, and fallen into the dreamless slumber which

‘Seals up the ship-boy’s eyes, and rocks his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,’

I was suddenly awakened by the sound of boisterous talk and loud laughter in the sitting-room without, and heard my chamber-fellow’s voice expostulating thus :

‘Now in madness,
Being full of supper and distempering thoughts,
Upon malicious knavery dost thou come
To start my quiet?’

‘Shut up your potato-trap, you confounded old quotation-monger!’ said the same stentorian speaker whose tones had first aroused me. ‘Where does your freshman kennel? I’ve come to draw him.’

Not knowing what this somewhat alarming sentence might import, I instinctively slipped the bolt of my door into its socket, which I could easily do from my bed, and struck a light. As I did so a rude shake at the handle told me that I had been only just in time, and the next moment the top panel of my door was driven in with a crash, and through the wreck appeared a round bullet head of curly black hair, surmounting an embrowned but decidedly prepossessing face, with a laughing demon in the eye.

‘How are you, young un? A boating-man, I hear! My name’s Knox; I’ve come to call. Wine with me to-morrow night?’ and so saying the countenance was withdrawn, and, after a little banter with Hardy, silence reigned once more in our rooms.

At breakfast the next day, Hardy, with a face of amusement mingled with perplexity, showed me a document which had been left on the table by our midnight visitor. It was headed by a rude scratch intended to represent the fiery cross, and was couched in Latin of the most canine order, requesting ‘*Omnes subgraduati venire ad menageriem, cum peacotibus bigstickibus et fireworkibus.*’ He proceeded to explain that Knox, designated at the font by the names of Frederick Augustus, but universally known as John, on the principle which dubbed any man of the name of Akers ‘Bob,’ or of Lambert ‘Dan,’ had determined

to celebrate his accession to the 'long silken sleeves' of a 'new-made baccalere,' not only by the party to which he had invited us in this unconventional fashion, but by starting the row royal in which his soul delighted; thereby, as Hardy observed, probably bringing the University career of half a dozen intimate friends to a close by getting them rusticated by the proctors.

'We must go to his rooms,' he added; 'but, luckily, I have a book to propose at the Union, and so I have an excuse for leaving early and taking you with me.'

So it was settled, and after hall dinner we proceeded to Knox's rooms, and found the symposium going on after the usual routine of an Oxford wine-party among the better set of men at that time. At one end of a long table, covered with wine-glasses, dessert-plates and dishes, sat the host, with whom each man as he came in shook hands or exchanged a nod, and then looked round for a vacant place, if possible in the vicinity of someone whom he already knew. A glass or two of wine was expected to be consumed by each guest, who often had other engagements of the same kind to attend elsewhere, and by natural gravitation the talk of each group settled into the particular channel with which the components were chiefly familiar, and babbled on through almost every department of study or of sport, only two subjects, politics and theology, being

eschewed, though both would occasionally come to the surface in a manner peculiar to the meridian of the University: if your next neighbour happened to be a country squire, in the form of a violent anathema against that villainous turncoat Sir Robert Peel; or if an Irish sympathizer, a denunciation of those brutes of Orangemen, or a fervid eulogy on that splendid fellow Smith O'Brien; possibly, too, a well-dressed man, with a little crucifix hanging from his watch-chain, would point out a particular biscuit as quite the right thing to eat on the eve of St. Jeremy, or direct your attention to a dish of orange-chips by assuring you that dear Newman was particularly fond of them.

At such a feast as this—the farewell wine-party of the stroke of the University boat—there was naturally a gathering only to be paralleled in its way by a reception at a Cabinet Minister's, and the comings and goings were equally incessant; so Hardy and I had no difficulty in effecting our retreat under cover of the exodus of a number of out-college men who had looked in on their way to the Union.

That famous debating club was then in the occupation of much humbler quarters than its present palatial ones, yet the speakers were no whit inferior, as a rule, to those of the present day, and many of them have made their mark upon contemporary

history. This, however, is not the place to describe an evening's oratory at the Union, though one figure does demand a special delineation. On his legs, as we entered, was a decidedly handsome young man in evening-dress, over which he wore the silk gown of a gentleman commoner, who with great pomp of voice and gesticulation was fluently pouring forth a flood of sesquipedalian declamation, received on all sides with what an unfriendly critic denominated spontaneous laughter and ironical applause.

'Here's fun—Wadham is up!' said Hardy as he wrote my name and inducted me into a seat.

It was a most remarkable exhibition, truly. It could scarcely be termed buffoonery, for the language if tawdry was apt, and the sentiments though flimsy were *ad captandum*. It was a mixture of high Cavalier romanticism, which was the stock-in-trade of young Oxford of that day, with the vague Rousseau-like philanthropy of which the 'most distressful country' has been the perennial theme. The subject of the debate was, I believe, a condemnation of the Premier's action with regard to Maynooth, but in a harangue which embraced the whole iniquities of the Whig party from the execution of Charles I. to the suspension of Dr. Pusey, the question before the house was utterly overlaid; and the irrelevancy of the speaker was so much to the taste of his audience that neither

the frequent cries of 'Question' nor the interpellations of the chairman availed to arrest his flow of speech until he had completed his peroration and sat down amid a roar of applause sufficient to drown the only expression of dissent then permitted, the scraping of feet upon the floor. His sitting down was the signal for the departure of a large number of members, evidencing that the sensation of the evening was over, and the question was shortly afterwards adjourned. Hardy, however, was compelled to remain, as he had his book to bring forward, and I stayed to witness the result.

Now, the book was the well-known 'Ingoldsby Legends,' against which one might have imagined no possible objection could have been taken; but no sooner had the librarian carried his list, and Hardy modestly suggested it as a supplement thereto, than a flutter made itself patent among a knot of men, ascetic in garb and bilious in complexion, who were sitting immediately opposite; and one rose to express the pain with which he heard the proposal of a ribald work in which the blessed saints were treated with the utmost disrespect. There was one ballad upon St. Gengulphus which was really shocking. Now, the librarian was a gentleman who posed as a Liberal Churchman, a freethinker, and an Arnoldite, but withal desirous of keeping on good terms with a powerful section of the University, so he promptly

interposed to say that, as a difference of opinion seemed to be entertained, he must refuse to accept the book proposed by the honourable gentleman; and, as the official members supported their colleague, a thin house rejected the motion.

By this time the hour of nine had struck, and Tom of Christchurch had tolled the hundred and one strokes which tallied with the number of students of the house, but Hardy asked me before returning to college to go round to Beaumont Street with him, as he wished to leave a note for his 'coach.' This détour took us up the Corn Market to the point where the Randolph Hotel now stands, the street itself being a melancholy avenue of cheap Bloomsbury architecture, in which, at a time when villas in the parks and along the Banbury Road were not, the few married men in Oxford had for the most part to make shift for a residence. Just as we were approaching the point where it debouched into the main thoroughfare, we heard the hoarse roar, varied by shriller exclamations, of an excited and hurrying crowd, and the next moment round the corner burst a flying figure crowned with a white hat, which bore straight down upon us, and, in less time than it takes to write the words, snatched Hardy's cap from his head, replacing it by the 'beaver,' and was lost to sight, as a posse of pursuers, partly proctors' bull-

dogs, partly townsmen and miscellaneous rabble, came dashing round the corner. There was only time for Lochinvar's parenthesis,

'One touch of the hand, and one word for the ear,'

the one touch being a smart fib from the left hand of Hardy which took a bellowing bull of Bashan, foremost in the ruck of the bargemen, neatly on the os frontis, and laid him prone in the kennel—'Pro-cumbit humi bos,' as Hardy never forgot to add as he told the story in after-days—and the one word parlously akin to that which was recorded against Sterne's hero in 'Heaven's Chancery,' when

'After the lapse of a great many years
They booked Uncle Toby five shillings for swearing,
And blotted the fine out again with their tears;'

and the inheritor of the fatal headgear, ominous as the helmet of Otranto, was gone. As I collected my thoughts after this momentary shock, I discovered that the doorway into which the instinct of self-preservation had made me step was that of a chemist's shop, where the gas was still alight in expectation of some belated pilgrim to Hygeia, and that all I had to do was to make some purchase to insure immunity. This trifling ransom I proceeded to pay, and had the satisfaction to see the tide of pursuit roll on, and finally the proctor himself pass the window accompanied by his myrmidons. While I still hesitated to

commit myself to the street, where a few dubious-looking characters were lingering, after the manner of baffled bloodhounds by a running stream where they have lost the scent, the door communicating with the house opened, and there issued a gowmsman, so great in stature, and in carriage so composedly grand, that, like the son of Kish, he seemed to tower head and shoulders above the ordinary herd, and moved monarch of all he surveyed. Those who have seen the true successor of the herald Lindsay of the Mount in his uniform of the Royal Bodyguard may recognise the stately and stalwart figure. What Froissart would have dubbed the 'rascal rout' slunk away and vanished like the spirits in Tasso when Rinaldo entered the enchanted wood, and in the wake of so potent an escort I was safely conveyed to the immediate vicinity of my own college.

On reaching my rooms, I found that my friend had not returned, and it was with some perturbation that I awaited his reappearance. This happily took place before the witching hour of twelve, and he proceeded to narrate his adventures after our separation. When he had flogged his first assailant, he instantly darted down a narrow alley or passage running parallel to Beaumont Street, and I think still existent under the name of Friar's Entry, which he knew led to a lane at the back of the garden of Worcester College. To

fling away the terrible *caput delicti*, the white hat, twist his gown round his head, and put on a pace which far outstripped the three or four comrades of the fallen foe who had started in chase of him, was easy enough ; but if he reached the road in safety he could not regain the precincts of the University without running the risk, first of all of the comrades of the towpath, and then of proctors or policemen, to whom a bareheaded undergraduate would have to give a strict account of his movements. One sole chance of escape presented itself. Turning to the right where the thoroughfare past Worcester garden opened to his view, he made a desperate spring at an old stone wall, where various hollows and projections assisted his escalade, gained its top, and, catching hold of the bough of an overhanging tree, swung himself lightly and noiselessly to the ground within, just as the hurrying feet of his pursuers, who were certain that he would seek the college entrance, surmising no doubt that he was one of its members, could be heard passing his harbour of refuge. Still, his plight was anything but a pleasant one ; in the grounds of a strange college and without headgear, it seemed as if a collision with the authorities was a more certain contingency than ever. It has been asserted that a special providence presides over the fortunes of midshipmen ; most certainly there is a tutelary angel

aloft who looks after the necks of undergraduates. I stood gazing at the scene of Hardy's exploit not long ago, and could scarcely realize how such a feat could have been achieved, even by the favourite pupil of Mr. Maclaren, whose gymnastic school trained so many Alpine climbers. But I remembered a still more dangerous escalade, when a big Irishman clambered over the iron gates in front of Trinity, after a late and noisy evening in Brasenose. It was reported that when the dons were assembled in common-room the next day to deal with the offender, the President expressed a strong wish to see him repeat the performance as a condition of forgiveness. This suggestion he made to Thomas Short, the well-known tutor, who died Senior Fellow of Trinity because he refused on principle to accept a living which was not a guinea a soul, the hard-headed friend whose advice Newman sought when his recalcitrancy had reached its crisis, but whose counsel, like many another seeker after wisdom, he had not strength of mind to follow. Short's dry rejoinder to the proposition of the Head was: 'Very good, Mr. President, but we shall have to order in a bowl of punch to prime him for the feat.'

One can understand the relief with which, at this juncture, Hardy saw a head appear at a window on the ground-floor of the adjacent buildings, and recog-

nised the features of the Union orator Wadham, who cautiously opened the casement and softly inquired, 'Who are you?' Hardy gave his name and college *sotto voce*, and the Worcester man, unshipping one of the iron bars which protected his pantry window, flung out the end of a bath towel, by the aid of which the intruder scrambled into the rooms, and after a brief interval and some highly necessary refreshment was conveyed by his host to the porter's lodge, having been equipped with a borrowed trencher, and took leave as if he had been a legitimate guest, attaining the favoured shades of Brasenose without further misadventure. Knox left for London the next day, having driven to a friend's house a few miles from Oxford, and joined the train from a roadside station. No public notice, therefore, was taken of the disturbance, beyond fining a few men who had been found that night out of academic garb, and the incident of the riot at the menagerie was consigned to oblivion.

Hardy, however, who considered, and with some justice, that he was under a deep obligation to Wadham for his prompt succour, insisted upon asking him to luncheon, and bestowing upon him the usual courtesies which a senior man was wont to bestow upon a junior whom he delighted to honour. Personally I regretted this fancy of my partner's, for I had detected in Wadham a youth who had been

reading in my home vicinity with a private tutor of very objectionable antecedents, with none of whose clientèle had I any desire to be acquainted; and my repulsion towards his queer friend was soon shared by most of Hardy's acquaintance, Wadham being one of those men with whom an inch meant a very long ell. One could not but be provoked when, if an oak had been left unspoiled, one found on returning to one's rooms in the afternoon that a raid had been made upon them, and a favourite book carried off, perhaps, with a curt note of apology left in its place, or some special cigars or choice tobacco conveyed away; nor were matters any better if the tenant of the rooms on re-entering found Wadham in his easiest chair, in front of a good fire, indulging at his expense in both luxuries, the book and the weed, and to be received with a wave of the hand from the uninvited visitor, and a careless 'All right; mutual friend, Hardy, you know, eh!'

But Wadham had another bad habit, unpardonable at Oxford: he was an egotist of the first water, and therefore a bore. The man of one topic, however clever, is always a bore, especially when the topic is himself. No matter how the conversation started, Wadham invariably brought it round to his own exploits, his talent, his conquests, a monologue of autobiography like that to which Mr. Smangle treated Mr. Pickwick in the Fleet Prison, only the place of

the magnificent Jewess of surpassing beauty, who figured in the experiences of the latter gentleman, was taken in Wadham's by a grass-widow with a husband in India, whose devotion to his *beaux yeux* was something quite unparalleled.

Although he carefully avoided, for reasons of which I had a shrewd suspicion, any reference to his family, or to the Mentor under whose roof I had previously caught sight of him, he was not unwilling to relate truthfully and humorously enough the accident which brought him to Oxford. In the days of coach travelling the passengers were perforce brought into much closer conversational proximity than the comparative plenitude of elbow-room in railway-carriages necessitates. He had in the course of a somewhat lengthy journey so dazzled a certain tutor of his college by the fecundity and brilliancy of his talk as to inspire the don with a desire to secure so promising a recruit for his own lecture-room, thinking, it may be, that as, in the phrase of the Oxford bard,

‘Johnson once supplied
To Pembroke's gloom a lustre since denied,’

so Wadham might in future ages

‘Shine the brightest name
On Worcester's dingy register of fame.’

The worthy man, I fear, saw cause to distrust his discrimination, when his protégé, beyond his almost

mountebank reputation as an orator, did nothing whatever to justify his promise of celebrity, except the publication of a drama in blank verse, written in imitation of the Elizabethan playwrights, and containing plenty of their far-fetched conceits and turgid imagery, but very little of their true poetry.

The author, however, might have hung on at Oxford for a year or two longer had not an untoward misadventure cut short his career. It came to pass in this wise: The annual commemoration festival, in lieu of the plethora of terpsichorean engagements which now crowd its evenings, could boast then but a single ball, held in the large room of the Star (now the Clarendon) Hotel, and chiefly supported by county families and their guests, with just a sprinkling of such members of the University as happened to have connections among them. To this function Wadham betook himself, *factus ad unguem*, got up to the nines, and it must be admitted a handsome and picturesque figure of a dandy of the somewhat florid school in which both Disraeli and Bulwer were conspicuous in bravery of colour and jewellery.

I think I see him now, a solitary Adonis, for he knew nobody there, leaning against the wall, with his raven locks well swept back over his velvet collar, and his cheek supported by his right hand, in which he held a lemon-coloured kid glove, that the diamond

upon his little finger might be more in evidence, his lustrous dark eyes fixed languishingly upon the belle of the room, Miss ffarminghame, a damsel of high degree, equally vain of her good looks and the two little *f's* in her surname. Unfortunately, either his too evident adoration or some passing fancy caused a furtive smile to dimple her cheek, as her eye for an instant rested on the hero, who straightway marched up with a conquering air and solicited the favour of her hand for a dance.

The scene which ensued precisely resembled the one described in Thackeray's 'Pendennis' between Blanche Amory and the chef Mirabolant, and as I know that the novelist was occasionally a guest in Oxford at that period, I am half inclined to believe that the idea was suggested to him by what he saw that night in the Star ballroom, or heard described by some eye-witness. The part played by Pendennis in the novel was assumed by the lady's *fiancé*, the Hon. Tom Popenjoy, a favourite butt of the Christ Church aristocratic set, who characterized him in Sharpe's cruel stanza as :

' In one word,
As great a fool, almost, as he
Who made his sire a Lord.'

On this occasion, however, the Hon. Tom made the only smart retort which he ever uttered, for having

lashed himself into a towering rage, he accosted Wadham with :

‘What business have you here, sir? You’re some outsider—a swell mobsman, I dare say, and no member of the University at all!’

‘Indeed I am, sir,’ was the reply. ‘I’m Mr. Wadham of Worcester.’

‘Rubbish!’ retorted Popenjoy. ‘You don’t expect me to believe that. You might as well say you were Mr. Worcester of Wadham!’

And thereupon some stewards intervened, and Wadham was persuaded or forced to leave the room in the highest dudgeon. He betook himself to London by the early train the next morning, and from the old Hummums, or Rhodes’s Hotel, or some such haunt of the second-rate University man, despatched a fiery cartel of defiance to Popenjoy. The embryo peer thereupon attended at Bow Street with the family solicitor, and applied for a warrant against Wadham, who was bound over to keep the peace. In consequence the fact of the challenge became known to the authorities of Worcester, who dispensed with any further appearance of the belligerent’s name upon their books, so that Oxford and its confiding tradesmen knew him no more.

When the little coterie who breakfasted together on my staircase met next term, our regrets at the

departure of Hardy were not tempered by the fact, as one of the party expressed it, that the legacy we feared he might leave us in Wadham's acquaintance had likewise taken leave.

'We are quit of that strange being for evermore,' one of the group observed.

'I doubt that,' rejoined Bob Sawyer (like his prototype, an intending medico); 'he is not one of those fellows who will easily be drowned; we shall come across him by-and-by, never fear.'

Although I was incredulous, yet I was the first to do so. We were just then in the full swing of those amateur-dramatic successes which, thanks to the talents of Brandram and Talfourd, became the precursors of regular histrionic training in Oxford, and one Saturday I had betaken myself to London to procure certain plaids and sporrans needed for the equipment of the 'army' in 'Macbeth travestie,' my companion being one of the supernumeraries in question, a young Irish Viscount, Kilcrumper, to whose mercurial temperament, notwithstanding the fact that his histrionic powers were very strictly limited, our proceedings exercised a strong attraction.

It was the era when young noblemen drove cabriolets with a tiny tiger behind, and a vehicle of this kind met us at Paddington Station, that he might drive me down to Nathan's costume warehouse,

somewhere in the Cranborne Alley direction, in proper style; and it was not until we had arrived there that we were reminded by closed shutters that our call was on the Jewish Sabbath. The front-door, however, was open, and after some demur I prevailed upon the proprietor to take my order. This having been satisfactorily effected, the worthy Nathan addressed us:

‘Gentlemen, now you must eat with me; then I shall not break my law;’ and, to give effect to his device for turning a business visit into a friendly call, he produced from the arcana of his dwelling sundry portions of fried fish, much to the delight of my Irish friend, who forthwith established himself upon the counter, with his plate upon his lap, while I was accommodated with the customers’ chair, and our host with a three-legged stool, a battered quart pot of porter making the round of the trio. The costumier, in high good-humour at the Viscount’s condescension, prattled away glibly on subjects connected with his calling, and presently, pointing to a gorgeous cavalier doublet which hung upon the wall, said:

‘Now, there’s a beauty, silk velvet and point lace, superb style! If either of you gents wants a costoom for a masquerade, I could soon alter it to fit you, and the price—there, I’m bound to lose on it. It was made for a college gent, a hauthor. He took Miss

Kelly's theatre, and brought out his own play. But, bless you, 'twas a regular frost; he knowed nothing of the boards—reg'lar ammytoor stick, with legs you might a' drove a barrer between 'em. He's gone in the provinces to learn the moves, and as he couldn't pay, I've got the goods.'

'Was the play a good one, Nathan?' I inquired.

'Oh yes, quite correct card. Shakespeare drama—dress piece.'

'Was the name "Saxon Grange"?'

'S'elp me, that's just what it was. D'ye know the hauthor?'

'I should think so,' I said to Kilcrumper. 'It is the irrepressible Wadham again.'

Prepared, however, as I might have been for this vision of the ambitious poetaster appearing amid the troubled waters of the dramatic profession, I was most certainly taken by surprise but a few months later, when, on repairing to the paternal roof, after having satisfied the examiners, I heard at my parish church on the Sunday after my arrival a proclamation that Samuel Raleigh Wadham, of this parish, was about to present himself as a candidate for the sacred office of a deacon at the ensuing ordination of the Lord Bishop of Barchester, and that any objection must be made forthwith.

I could not help asking my good old friend the

Rector what he really thought of this announcement, and was informed by him that the candidate was unquestionably residing under the roof of his *ci-devant* preceptor, and that he had assigned as his reason for giving up what he described as a distinguished literary career, that he was about to be married to the widow of an Indian officer whom he had known and admired for some time.

'In fact,' added the worthy cleric, 'he seems to have been the bearer of the intelligence of her husband's death, and to have played the part of consoler so well that the engagement dates from that interview. Of course,' he wound up by saying, 'the main point is that Bishop Proudie has accepted him as a candidate for Orders, we must presume, after due inquiry, but it is open to anyone to object.'

No such objection, however, was made, the ordination shortly took place, and at the end of a twelve-month, being now in full orders, the Rev. S. R. Wadham was gazetted to an East India chaplaincy.

It could not have been more than three or four years after this that I had a letter from one of the old merry Brasenose set whom I have mentioned before, Bob Sawyer, who had gravitated eastward in his medical capacity, and established himself in a good practice at Calcutta. The epistle mainly referred to the proposed purchase and transmission of an

outrigged four-oared boat, in which some sporting subalterns were desirous of carrying off the cup at a Hooghly regatta; but in the course of sundry miscellaneous gossip he added :

‘I have sent you a *Times of India*, by which you will see what a splash that queer fish Wadham is making in these tranquil waters. His wife has bolted with young Hastings, a nephew of the Governor-General, a boy of twenty, while she owns to thirty-five; and Wadham has obtained £500 damages. So he has taken a hall, and come out with historical orations on the past empires of the world, with scenery and adjuncts, *à la* the Egyptian Hall Mont Blanc, and, I should say, must be coining money.’

‘Ah,’ said Hardy, now established in chambers at Elm Court, Temple, ‘Wadham is like the man of whom it was said that, if he had been robbed, stripped, and thrown into the Thames, he would come to the surface in half a dozen seconds in a new suit, and with plenty of money in his pockets!’

‘I look upon him as a potential gold-mine,’ struck in young Jerome, a literary aspirant of whom in those days I saw a good deal; ‘and I mean to write his life.’

To this I demurred, alleging my prior acquaintance with him; so Jerome and I tossed up for it, and I won, little dreaming that I should have poor Jerome’s own tragic end to write before Wadham’s.

What a scattering effect an interval of ten years has upon any coterie of young men! It certainly had upon our merry B. N. C. circle. Knox, despite the traditions of his name, had joined the Church of Rome, and was an ascetic Trappist. Kilcrumper had been taken up, stark and stiff, from the bloodstained sod where he lay at Inkerman with the broken hilt of his sword still clenched in the hand of death, and had been laid in the burial-place of his ancestors under the Irish cross of gray granite, the shattered shaft of which (blown up by Nationalist spite ten years ago) points like an accusing finger to heaven. Hardy had developed a taste and capacity for art, which had led him to Norway, there to make sketches, by which he was realizing an income tenfold greater than any which his briefs would have brought him; while Sawyer, having returned to England, was coming as rapidly to the front in the ranks of medical journalists.

Happening to be in London one day, I met the last-named friend, who inquired if I had heard a new popular preacher who was taking the town by storm, a Mr. De l'Adam; and if I had not, would I go with him to hear the fashionable orator? There are certain quarters of the West End where, in the Georgian era, proprietary chapels were allowed to be erected by Act of Parliament—buildings which, though un-

consecrated, possess many of the privileges and immunities of regular Church of England edifices, although, as in the instance of the one described in 'The Newcomes,' where Charles Honeyman was wont to officiate, Mammon has his quarters near or in close proximity to the Deity.

Several of these structures have ceased in later years to exist at all, and in some cases where the fabric remains it is applied to a very different purpose. One in Conduit Street is an Ulster warehouse; another in Percy Street, where 'Satan' Montgomery used to hold forth, became a depot for grocery; while the one to which we repaired in search of our sensation, after its sun had gone down beclouded by a twilight of Socialistic gatherings and sparring-matches, sank into a carpet warehouse, which has absorbed also two flanking houses of the most meagre order of Carpenter's Gothic, one of which was tenanted, tradition says, by Mrs. Mary Anne Clarke, in the days when she made a good market of her influence at the Horse Guards; and in later years by the brilliant, short-lived James Hannay. The somewhat dingy street in which it stood had never, I think, even in the most brilliant era of the audacious demirep's levée, seen such an array of carriages as now blocked its thoroughfare.

My friend was provided with a talismanic passport

from some journal or other, which enabled us, as soon as we had elbowed our way through the throng on the pavement outside, to occupy a brace of comfortable seats in a little gallery, from whence we could view, after the manner of the landsman described by Virgil, the seething tide of humanity below, squeezing, pushing and contending for places with all the venom in which well-dressed mobs surpass every other collection of humankind—by the amount of what Yankees call cussedness which they can impart into the struggle. The old lady whom Charles Dickens observed improving her position in the crowd of spectators at an Easter function in Rome, by means of a large corking-pin, must have been, as our observation showed us, the type of a class, for if the point of the weapon was not in evidence, there was a grip with which a dowager would restrain a competitor which a locomotive itself, *me judice*, would have found it impossible to evade.

The opening sentences of the liturgy were gone through to the accompaniment of a hubbub of suppressed sound which argued indifference to the idea of devotion in connection with the audience, rather attending an exhibition than assisting at worship. The very arrangement of the building would be little in accordance with the views of the churchgoer of

the present day. Against the wall which faced the entrance were planted two tribunes or rostra, each with a door opening through the wall behind, and between them, in a semicircular recess or alcove, something very like a Pembroke table, partially veiled by a velvet cloth, on which were two cushions and a quarto Prayer-Book, such being the chancel and its apparatus in a Church of England conventicle (chapel-of-ease was the recognised term) fifty years ago, affording the greatest possible contrast to the tinsel and the trimmings, the vases and the decorations, without which adjuncts the advanced Churchman of to-day is unable, it would seem, to realize the ideal of worship.

Our Tavistock Place congregation, as I have said, would hardly be described as a model one; yet many an earnest prayer has been offered, and many a conscience stirred, in buildings no more tastefully adorned than that in which we met that night:

‘ Why should facing East or West,
Table plain, or altar drest,
Mar the worth of praise or prayer
When the two or three are there ?
Why should priest of either hue,
Posing each as Churchman true
(Though of quite opposing kidney),
Join in unison to bid knee
Bend at some peculiar angle,
As to which they vainly wrangle ?’

Gradually the confusion simmered down into the stuffy restlessness of a room tenanted up to its full pitch, and by the conclusion of the Psalms, chanted by a concealed choir of female voices to a somewhat florid accompaniment, a hushed silence pervaded the area as the door of the unoccupied tribune opened and, in snowy surplice, bands of rival snow, a voluminous chaplain's scarf, and lavender gloves of exquisite fit, appeared—Wadham, the same in all essentials of feature and of manner as when we had seen the last of him at Oxford ten years before.

That he was now the battered man of the world, and not the fresh youth of the University, was perceptible, however, not only in the indefinable coarsening of the contour of the features, but in the long and well-cared-for hair, erst jetty black, but now a sable silvered into uniform gray of by no means an unbecoming tint. He read both lessons in a clever theatrical, impressive style; in the second chapter, which happened to be the parable of the Prodigal, he descended to the artifice of employing two voices in the dialogue between the father and the erring son, a device which, questionable as its taste might be, caused symptoms of tears to be visible among his hearers.

At length the moment approached for which it was clear the bulk of the congregation were waiting, and

when the sermon began not even Æneas himself, when he narrated his adventures at the Court of Queen Dido, could have had a more attentive audience. His voice, always a fine one, was modulated with great skill, and his hands were balanced in a style which might have provoked the envy of Orator Henley himself. Whether his diction had improved by practice, or whether he employed a 'ghost,' after the example of that Bishop of Tuam of whom it was written,

'This spouter of charges gets scribblers to do 'em,
Reversing the saying of *moum* and *tuum*,'

it would be impossible to say, but certainly his faulty logic and extreme affectation were by no means as perceptible as in days of yore, although the same vanity was latent, as when he introduced an allusion to hair silvered more by grief than age, and again to the shock which is harder to sustain than any other, the wreck of the domestic affections, and applied a snowy cambric handkerchief to his eyes, a manœuvre received with such a volley of sobs from his sympathetic hearers as wellnigh to drown the conclusion of the sentence.

For full two years afterwards the popular ear had quite a surfeit of the eminent Mr. De l'Adam, a name which he had coined by treating the W in Wadham as a digamma, leading up to an archaic form, in the way

that Seymour is sublimated into St. Maur, etc. The De l'Adam divorce case was before the House of Lords; the De l'Adam bankruptcy occupied the Insolvent Court; paragraphs in minor journals told of the fabulous sums collected for charities after Mr. De l'Adam's eloquent sermons, but omitted to record the handsome percentage which he was shrewdly suspected to levy before the proceeds were handed over. Mr. D.'s refusal of an Irish bishopric; Mr. D.'s approaching marriage with a lady of exalted rank and enormous fortune; Mr. D.'s admirable recitations from Shakespeare: these and half a hundred more paragraphs appeared, all evidently inspired, and all tending to one end—the honour and aggrandisement of Mr. De l'Adam.

How near he really was to the harvest of his ambition few were aware. Fauntleroy, secretary to a Cabinet Minister, one day met me:

'You know something about the popular preacher De l'Adam, I think,' he observed.

'Yes,' I said; 'I fancy I know as much as anyone.'

'Ah!' he returned, 'then you are the man I want. He is constantly being brought before our notice by great people, and Sam (his chief) wants to know if he could make him a Bishop?'

'Certainly not,' was my reply; and I had no

difficulty in putting Fauntleroy on the track of his former life, and disposing of his chances of a mitre.

Indeed, the pomp and glory of his first celebrity had but a brief existence, and ere long Marylebone replaced Mayfair in the congregations which still adequately filled the larger chapel to which he had now migrated. He no longer talked with a *nolo episcopari* air of his prospects of Church preferment, but wished it to be understood that he was essentially a man of letters, hovering on the confines of Bohemia. Articles in the *Thunderer*, and public reading of poetry and the drama, were to be henceforth his main resource. Not that he gave up his pulpit oratory, but, on the other hand, gracefully hinted that a certain vein of heterodoxy was the cause of his holding back from the dignities open to a successful Churchman, an announcement by which for a time he gained another class of hearers.

Theosophy and spiritualism are not the *fin-de-siècle* developments which casual observers believe them to be, but revivals of past illusions, an exhibition of that charlatan spirit which flits, a vaporous entity of ever-changing form, in the air of the ages from generation to generation. With the professors of these heterodox tenets the popular preacher grew more and more identified, thus recruiting his waning congregations from the disciples of the newer cults, edging away at

the same time from the pulpit to the platform, where he regularly took his place as a subsidized popular entertainer.

It was at this period, when his career had passed its zenith, that I again saw him in the locality of our early association. It happened that a temporary appointment of an official character necessitated my attendance at the Commemoration in Oxford, rendered more brilliant than usual by a royal visit. During the period of saturnalian turbulence which then invariably preceded the formal business of the convocation in the Sheldonian Theatre, I could not but observe one figure among the spectators in the area appropriated to Masters of Arts, who was exciting the savage indignation of the occupants of the undergrads' gallery, serving in fact as a sort of lightning-conductor for those peals of impertinent interruption by which the serious business of the day was too frequently rendered inaudible. I scanned the crowd to discover the quarry, and found it was Wadham. How he had in the first instance attracted the wrath of the noisy juniors I never precisely ascertained, but the storm of contumely which he had evoked was so great that he had to give way to it, and amid the derisive laughter of his persecutors leave the arena.

In reality his mission in Oxford was that of special correspondent to a leading morning journal, which

profited no doubt by his descriptive letters, written with considerable spirit and much happy observation. It was therefore not surprising that a leading article dealt with the turbulence of the gallery in so pointed a reference to the particular incident as to place its inspiration beyond conjecture. Justly remarking upon the anomaly of allowing a high function of solemn importance to the University to be made the occasion of an exhibition of practical joking and meaningless clamour on the part of young men *in statu pupillari*, the writer went on to remind the offenders that their judgment was by no means symptomatic of the verdict of posterity, as they had in days past treated as contumeliously Samuel Wilberforce (then the almost canonized representative of the English episcopate), as they had recently done another celebrated cleric, who might possibly emulate even the success of the great Samuel of Oxford himself.

No such fate was in store for my versatile acquaintance. There is a certain moral dry-rot which affects men and withers their career, of which Wadham began to show the unmistakable signs. Mine is a sketch, not a post-mortem dissection, so I need not pursue the diagnosis of its symptoms. He went to America on tour as a public reader, and soon afterwards his secession from the Church of England, and his reception (as a layman) into that of Rome,

were publicly announced. His monetary affairs were notoriously in a state of embarrassment, and it was generally reported that he purposed to return to his first love, the stage.

From my friend Dr. Sawyer, whom I knew he often consulted, I inquired if this was really his intention, and was assured that it was not so, inasmuch as the physical drawback to which years before Nathan had called our attention would have interfered with the project had it been contemplated. I might have remembered, too, that the *Saturday Review* had once, in an article full of what Hamley called its 'bilious priggishness,' said that 'Mr. De l'Adam's legs were not accustomed to public speaking.' Moreover, Sawyer told me that his constitution had broken down, and that his life was very precarious.

'I am really sorry for the fellow,' said the kind-hearted editor of the *Scalpel*; 'he has had his faults, but he has been weighed down by the consequences of early indiscretion, and anxiety as well as excitement has made him burn his candle at both ends. He must shortly undergo an operation, not severe, as these things go, but his impaired vital power will probably give way, and then the end will come rapidly. Do you know,' he added, 'what has been the millstone round his neck? When he was at that tutor's where you first remember him, a lad under

twenty, vanity led him to pass himself off as a clergyman, and to officiate at a country parish in Staffordshire, thereby exposing himself to unknown pains and penalties. A rascal who was in the secret has blackmailed him all his life, and if he had any second reason beyond honest conviction for his change of faith, though I quite believe that he is sincere, it would be that he renders this scoundrel's threat to have him degraded from his Orders in the Church of England a nugatory one.'

The year had not elapsed when the medical fiat was confirmed by the result, and the once-popular preacher joined the unseen majority whose names are 'writ in water.'





MR. JEROME OF WYECHESTER.

WYECHESTER in my day was one of the larger, but hardly one of the more distinguished, colleges in Oxford. Ancient as its foundation was, it had never attracted any great number of men from that part of England with which its name suggested a connection, and by 1840 its list of alumni simply comprised a

respectable crowd from divers portions of Great Britain, a heterogeneous mass which made it, as a cynic once observed, more of a caravansary than a college. Its scholarships were not so amply endowed as to present special attractions to students of the highest order of genius, and thus, while maintaining a fairly decent place in the studies and sports of the University, the name of Wyechester conferred but little social importance upon men otherwise undistinguished. Internally it was believed that no college of that date was more split up into cliques and sets, except perchance that renowned hall whose two undergraduates were not upon speaking terms.

Upon one point, however, at least seventy-five out of the hundred Wyechester residents were cordially agreed, namely, in their detestation of the Rev. Wilbraham Newall, Vice-Principal and Senior Tutor, a man who with the very best intentions and more than respectable attainments was perhaps the most shortsighted administrator that ever mismanaged a college. Possibly, had he lived in the present day, he might have been able to combine with the infantine regimen which was his ideal diet of a period of nonage a certain flavour of heterodoxy and general license which would have served as piquant sauce to make this Spartan fare palatable. But the chilly conservatism of the school of Peel and the loveless ortho-

doxy of Archbishop Laud were his ideals in politics and religion, and he had too strong an attachment to the principles he professed to deviate in the smallest degree from the straitest formula, or to call in the aid of romance or ritual to recommend his menu, which suited the taste of the junior members of Wyechester about as much as the sumptuary laws of Mr. Squeers' establishment, would have done.

His attempts at moral discipline (as he styled it) were regarded with vehement dislike, and these feelings of animosity were fanned into fiercer flame when it was alleged (and not contradicted) that he proposed to establish, through the machinery of the college servants, a system of espionage upon the expenditure and habits of the undergraduates.

The irritation arrived at a climax, and culminated as in wider fields and more seething periods of popular discontent, in a gunpowder plot, a veritable volcano, which found its Pliny in a well-known Scottish man of letters, a Wyechester undergraduate of those days, who narrated the whole transaction in a close and spirited parody of Scott's poetical romances, printed at the time for private circulation, but now, like so many other Oxonian *jeux d'esprit*, among the rarest of the rare volumes.

It would appear that the medium through which the conspirators obtained their infernal machine was

a 'discommoned' tradesman, whom Newall had detected in some delinquency, and therefore placed under the ban which forbade dealings with members of the college. This personage, who naturally bore no goodwill to the tutor, easily contrived for the smuggling of the explosive into college, and its lodgment in the rooms of one of the junior members, who had been selected for the office of setting into action the actual petard itself, because, being a family connection of the unpopular object of their resentment, and a quiet, well-conducted man to boot, he was the last person upon whom any suspicion was likely to fall.

This gentleman, who died only recently, a dignitary of the Church of England, full of years and honour, when he found that the event had become historical, kindly added his recollection of it to the version given by the rhymester. According to this comparison of authorities, the leaders in the plot—*conjurati cælum rescindere fratres*—deposited the 'demon' about midnight in the centre of the front quadrangle of Wyechester, having taken the precaution to lay trains of powder to every one of the staircases which opened into the court, so that a chain of evidence should not be traceable to one particular set of rooms. Their preparations complete, at the hour selected, among the smaller ones of morning, a

light was applied to one of the trains, and the hushed repose of the college was startled by a loud detonation.

One of the concoctors, sitting perdu at his window just opposite the porter's lodge, was expecting the event, when to his horror he beheld the awakened janitor in impromptu toilet making full for the pyre. Ere, however, the spectator could make up his mind to dash down and, at the risk of conviction for complicity in the crime, warn the porter of his danger, the sound of a hissing squib caused that worthy functionary to waddle back in double-quick time to his lodge beneath the main gateway, and observe from thence in safety the finale of these suspicious symptoms.

Long before that period had arrived, however, the bursting of rockets in showers of fiery gold, the Roman candles, serpents, and every variety of invention by which

✂ 'Ignis in ætheras volucer se sustulit auras,'

and the maroons and other detonating mixtures which were interspersed in this olla-podrida of dissonance, had effectually aroused the whole college, and caused some alarm in the wider circle of the University generally. Of course Newall was frantic, and as each successive explosion seemed to shake the ancient

walls to their very foundations, and illumined every nook and cranny with the red glare of conflagration, while from windows hastily thrown open exclamations (not always of disapproval) reached his ear, he was with difficulty persuaded not to make the hazardous attempt of a personal venture to extinguish the concoction.

For twenty minutes the 'infernal machine' pursued its relentless career, and at last, with a final peal of more appalling noise than ever, the flames leapt up and died out, leaving nothing save the ashes of a few firework cases, and blackened trains of gunpowder, camphor, and other combustibles, quenched under Newall's direction (lest 'even in the ashes' should live the 'wonted fires') with copious torrents of pump-water. Having taken this precaution, the officials overhauled the débris, and were seen to bear away in triumph a metal cap or socket which it was shrewdly concluded would be sure to be stamped with the maker's name, and thus afford a clue which might ultimately lead them to the perpetrators of the outrage. They then retired to such rest as the advancing dawn permitted.

Early on the ensuing day a seniority (meeting of Fellows) was held, in all the solemn terrors of such an august Sanhedrim, and after a somewhat tedious recapitulation by Newall and the porter of facts tolerably

well known to everyone present, the Provost himself, with spectacles and a huge lens, proceeded to spell out certain characters which were indubitably to be made out impressed upon the metal fragment which had been secured from the embers. Duly, as if tracing some cuneiform inscription, did he evoke the fateful words, 'Warranted to go off as loud as ten cannon.' And these were all. Certainly never were 'judges all ranged in terrible row' more utterly non-plussed than were the dons of Wyechester with the anonymous *corpus delicti* now before them.

Utterly baffled and disgusted, they fell back upon the hackneyed expedient of summoning all the ne'er-do-weels and irregular men in college, and demanding on their honour whether they had had any hand in the explosion, which, even if cognisant of it, they could honestly deny, having purposely been kept at safe distance from any personal participation in the 'lark,' and as the actual perpetrators never came under suspicion at all, the whole matter ended like the explosive, as Jerome observed to me, with the epitaph :

'Exeat in fumo.'

It was from Jerome that I first heard the narrative of this escapade, although several years must have elapsed between the time of its occurrence and my acquaintance with him. Newall was still a prominent

figure in the college, and was not more popular with successive generations of undergraduates than he had been with the 'fireworkers.' It is strange how long a leading don can maintain his ascendancy even when distasteful to almost every one of those with whom he has to do, and how much longer unpleasant men seem to remain in authority than popular ones.

I suppose that Newall could not but be conscious of some element of failure in his system, when Stafford Snowden was made a judge and a baronet, and his Wyechester contemporaries recalled the time when he was a candidate for a Fellowship at another college, and Newall refused him the necessary testimonials of good conduct until forced under the threat of a mandamus from the Queen's Bench to furnish them. Philipson, too, poet and orator, ought to have been a member of Wyechester when his poem gained the Newdigate prize, instead of having to take temporary refuge at a hall, until incorporated by the college which now claims him with so much pride. Jerome had these and plenty more stories against Newall ever ready to excuse his own academical faults and failings, but whether he would have had a less disastrous career had his tutorial star not been so malign is a speculation regarding which I should be sorry to express any positive opinion, but must leave my readers to form their own judgment.

The theatrical epidemic which infected the University of Oxford about the end of the 'forties' was still at its height when, just after taking my degree, I paid a flying visit to Alma Mater for the purpose of completing certain arrangements connected with a proposed performance at the ensuing Henley Regatta. This scheme always involved a drive from Oxford to Henley—the most pleasant, if not the speediest and most economical mode of visiting the ancient borough 'by Tamise ripe.' When dining with our author-manager, Frank Talfourd, I mentioned to him that I had ordered a dogcart with a pair of horses (one to be sent on beyond the limits of the University, and then attached as a leader, after that fashion so dear to juvenile Jehus, and so morosely forbidden by the powers that be in Oxford), and that, having invited a friend to accompany me, there were still two seats at Talfourd's disposal.

Accepting this offer, irresistible to an idly-disposed man, Talfourd added that he would bring a recruit who had lately joined his dramatic corps, 'a cheery though heavy youth' (as he described him); 'clever enough, and a crack debater at the Union, but on the stage imbued with a trifle of the brick-and-mortar style of Nicholas Nickleby's old manager, Crummles.' So I trysted to breakfast at Talfourd's rooms the next morning, and this was my first meeting with Skrym-

shire Morton Jerome, reputed by Wyechester men to be 'a certain first,' a reputation which he was frittering away as rapidly as possible. He was no doubt highly prepossessing in feature, figure and manner, above the middle height, stalwart and erect, with a frank smile and easy grace of speech, well read and apt at quotation.

His father, as I learned by-and-by, had been a creditable, if not celebrated, member of the old band of brothers who commenced the *Edinburgh Review*, and had obtained the clerkship of one of the City companies of London, with a good salary and a residence adjoining the livery hall, a noble building, gorgeous in fine old carved mahogany and hammered iron, but generally denominated by Jerome *fils* 'the family vault.' As the friend of Grote and Sydney Smith, Jerome *père* had no little influence with men in high positions, and moreover claimed cousinship with a Cabinet Minister. In those days, when 'Take care of Dowb' was an official watchword, the son of such a man seemed likely to obtain advancement, so that I must own I came at once under the spell of his easy self-confidence, and imagined that I had made the acquaintance of a 'coming man.'

I think, however, that the events of the day upon which I first fell in with him might have instilled some doubt into my mind whether a barque with

youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm, which carried so little ballast, would ride a triumphant voyage upon the stormy waters of the ocean of life. Indeed, they had so much bearing on Jerome's after-career that they are worth repeating in their entirety. We duly started from Talfourd's temporary abode in our high dogcart, the driving-seat being occupied by a friend of mine who had just taken his degree like myself, known generally in college as De Beaumanoir, though really his name was Westfield, because his sponsors having chosen to adopt the form of Lucas instead of Luke for his Christian name, the coincidence with one of the subordinate characters in 'Ivanhoe' earned him his Norman appellation, which was the more appropriate inasmuch as he expressed his intention of becoming a soldier-monk by qualifying for an army chaplaincy—a destination which he emphasized by the growth of a moustache, then an unknown facial adornment in Oxford, though within a decade the fashion had become so general as to provoke the interference of the authorities :

'Those cunning old shavers whose ordinance strips
The rust from our razors, the hair from our lips.
Whence bare as an egg is each countenance here :
No moustache is now dripping with Brasenose beer :
Which ornament (swellish, yet somewhat *outré*)
Can be only assumed with the hood of B.A.'

De Beaumanoir duly carried out his intention, but

had scarcely been transferred to foreign service ere a stumble of his horse in a morning canter cut short his career, like that of many a bold rider from William of Orange to Henry of Waterford. No man was better company in his college days; he rode and drove and sang to perfection, and under his gayer qualities ran an undercurrent of seriousness which made them all the more attractive. He was our charioteer that morning, who

‘ With whipcord near
Made music in the leader’s ear,’

when that quadruped had been scientifically affixed in front after the manner which furnished Samuel Wilberforce with one of his best illustrations in reply to a young clergyman who had ventured to say that he could not see why there should be more harm in his driving two horses tandem, than in the Bishop’s carriage and pair.

‘ If you place the palms of your hands together, my good friend,’ the prelate, with a twinkle in his eye, replied, ‘ the idea suggested is seemly and devotional; but if you place the thumb of the right hand against the little finger of the left, I am afraid that the suggestion is not so decorous.’

As I occupied the seat next our Jehu in right of my seniority, and to bear the brunt of possible proctorial interference, our professed wits were

relegated to the back-bench; but the ball of conversation was merrily kept up, and we were all in that state of mind which the author of 'The Vicar of Wakefield' so deftly indicated when he put into the mouth of his hero the remark, 'I do not know whether we were wittier than usual, but I am sure there was more laughing'; and I must say that I heartily agree with Mortimer Collins that I am glad to have lived before all the sherry was dry, and all the ale bitter, and when men who professed to be wise were not ashamed of being merry. Even elephantine Johnson found in the rapid motion of a post-chaise an exhilarating stimulant, and the hobbling canter of the postboy's galled jades could bear poor comparison to the swinging ten-mile-an-hour trot of our two choice Oxford hacks, the measured rhythm of the tattoo played by the hoofs of the quadrupeds making cheery music, and combining with the fresh air in rapid motion and the quick succession of sights and sounds of country life which used to form so great a part of the pleasure of the traveller by road, to make our pulses beat in tune, and chase for the nonce the twin sleuth-hounds—Care and Thought—to the borders of oblivion.

I may add that—quite agreeing with the ostler at Aylesbury, who remonstrated with a friend of mine upon the partiality of 'You gents from Oxford—

vich' (he put in a parenthesis) 'is hall knowledge—for them 'orrid tin horns!'—our instrumental music was confined to a cornepean of Talfourd's, which he manipulated sufficiently skilfully to be pleasant in an *al-fresco* tune; and I contributed a song just written for a Protectionist dinner by a friend whose Oxford parodies were then very popular, the tune and words whereof met the approbation of my auditors, though they scarcely approved such a sentiment as this:

'Twas England's boast till just of late, Sir,
That none but Churchmen ruled the State, Sir;
But it's possible now that anybody's babby
May live to see the premier a Jewish Rabbi.
There never were times like these, I ween,
For the good old toast of Church and Queen.'

Jerome and Talfourd, hereditary Liberals both, vehemently demurred to these Tory fleers at the Liberal watchwords, and this brought on a political and oratorical challenge to a display of public speaking at the earliest opportunity. This discursive controversy beguiled the tedium of the rather bleak road between Dorchester, once the seat of a Saxon Bishop, and Nettlebed, the crest of the hill whence the road descends to the valley of the Thames, entering the little town by that superb stretch of avenue known as the Fair Mile.

While Talfourd and I transacted our indispensable business with the builder and contractor—from whom

we rented a spacious loft adjacent to his timber-yard, where the religious services of some mysterious denomination took place on Sundays, while the lessor during the week erected our stage there and allowed us the use of the vestry and pulpit for properties and refreshments, reminding me of Mr. Maguire's coronation arrangements in the Abbey—

‘There was cakes and apples in all the Chapels,
And fine polonies, and rich mellow pears’—

—De Beaumanoir and Jerome had ordered dinner at the Catherine Wheel, then kept by the admirable hostess who for many years after presided at the Red Lion over generations of boating men.

A simple, well-cooked meal and glass of really good wine by no means damped our spirits, and Jerome, harking back to our badinage during the drive, offered, if I would give him a shilling's worth of halfpence, to address an audience upon the subject of the currency. The bait of a few coppers, judiciously distributed as a scramble among some idling boys, soon collected a little crowd, whom Jerome, stepping out upon the balcony of our first-floor room, favoured with a rather clever burlesque oration in unconscious parody of his own serious style, verging sometimes on the stilted. He was brought to a halt after a few minutes by an interruption from a chimney-sweep who had joined the audience, where-

upon, putting his hand to his ear and leaning forward, he said very deliberately, 'I did not catch the exact remark made by the gentleman in mourning,' a repartee which seemed to tickle most wonderfully the rest of the auditors, under cover of whose laughter and applause Jerome made his bow and retreated into the room, forthwith challenging me to harangue in my turn. This I declined to do, but offered to speak before a larger assembly if one could be collected, a proposal which led to an animated discussion upon ways and means, which terminated, after various suggestions more or less extraordinary had been brought forward, in the adoption of a daring idea of Talfourd's that, as his father, the judge, had by his promotion just vacated his seat for the town of Reading, we might drive over and address the electors from a balcony in the market-place, used for such displays, which he would show us.

As I was returning to London, this suited my plans right well, and, after paying our bill and putting to our horses, instead of driving back to Oxford, we were soon on the road to the ancient Berkshire borough, then vastly smaller than the huge industrial town which now boasts its name, and reached it just as the shops were closing and the operatives returning from their work.

'There,' said Talfourd, pointing out a mercer's

shop in the market-place, 'is your balcony, and all you will have to do is to walk up the stairs on the right hand half-way up the shop, and to take possession of the room immediately facing them on the landing. I cannot show, of course,' he added, 'but I will get up a crowd for you.'

How he proceeded to achieve this purpose I know not; but when, ten minutes later, the remaining trio, who,

' Like Cockney fox-hunter of lily heart,
That needs the jumping-powder ere he start,'

had imbibed a final 'peg' at a neighbouring bar, quietly ascended the staircase, and a startled female had hastily vacated the apartment, a score or two of loungers at least were on the flags beneath, who received us, on emerging through the window, with a faint cheer, in which Talfourd's voice was plainly discernible.

De Beaumanoir, who boasted lungs of leather and a front of bronze, forthwith constituted himself an impromptu chairman, and plunged *in medias res* by congratulating the independent electors of Reading upon the opportunity they would enjoy of listening to addresses touching their responsibilities at the present juncture from eminent Liberal orators like Mr. Montgomery of Manchester and Mr. Lincoln of Leeds, by which latter pseudonym he introduced me.

Taking off my hat, and comporting myself as near the conventional ideal of a candidate as recollection served me, I there and then delivered my first and last democratic harangue, a parody and exaggeration of the Chartist oratory of that period. With abundance of voice, boyish self-confidence, and the frequent use of 'apt alliteration's artful aid,' I fancied that I succeeded in catching the ear of the groundlings. I was laughed at, no doubt, but I was also laughed with, and although the cheers might be in a measure ironical, they were both profuse and well timed.

This partial success stimulated me to renewed extravagance, and my picture of the mitred and ermined despots who battered on the life-blood of the workers would have graced a labour candidate for an East-End constituency. I was not, however, so totally and recklessly demented as to fail to see that on such occasion brevity must be the soul of wit, and had I forgotten that pregnant truth I should have been reminded of it by Jerome, who kept plucking at my coat-tails in his anxiety to have his own innings; so I very shortly concluded with a most powerful peroration, in which I expressed, amid enthusiastic cheers, my hope that the names of Feargus O'Connor and Richard Cobden would go down to posterity with those of Oliver Cromwell

and James Blomefield Rush (a famous murderer of that period!).

Under cover of the applause which my undetected sarcasm had evoked, I made way for Mr. Montgomery of Manchester, represented by S. M. Jerome. As his figure was better, his voice more sonorous, and his style more imposing, than mine, he would no doubt have scored a great success, but for an interruption in the room behind us of which I became aware as I stepped back. I found the stalwart De Beaumanoir, in a towering rage, just about to inflict personal chastisement upon an equally angry little man, who was indignantly protesting against this invasion of his domicile.

My interposition was so far successful that the trial by battle was abandoned; but as neither party would give way, De Beaumanoir insisting that he had a right there to address the electors, a statement which seemed to drive the householder to frenzy, the legitimate possessor departed in search of a policeman, whereupon I induced De Beaumanoir to follow at his heels, while I returned to the balcony to stop Jerome's flow of words, which, the crowd being by this time considerably augmented, were evoking uproarious applause and clamour. Persuading him with some little difficulty that the scrape would be a serious one were we given into

custody, I was relieved to hear him make his excuses for an abrupt conclusion, and promise to return upon an early day.

Taking his arm, we walked downstairs, and about half-way encountered our irate 'patron' with a policeman, whom he straightway conjured to take us into custody. The guardian of the peace hesitated, taking advantage of which Jerome bewildered him with an avalanche of argument to show that nothing irregular or illegal had been in our minds, consequently we had been guilty of no offence, while I used my best arts of persuasion to convince our unwilling host that, having received our invitation from a gentleman of influence in the place (who had sworn us to secrecy as to his name), I was entitled to suppose that a tacit sanction would be given to our invasion of his premises.

What probably influenced our opponents far more than any of these sophistical pleas was that we were evidently in full retreat, and they doubtless held by the adage of a bridge of gold for a flying enemy. We emerged, therefore, without molestation by a side-door into an alley, and, turning in the opposite direction to the market-place, made a circuit of a few streets, which brought us back to the tavern where we had stabled our steeds. Our friends were awaiting us, and, while I took the next train to London,

the others, guided by that good-fortune which favours scapegrace Oxonians, regained the University without mishap.

This adventure so far had an influence upon Jerome's future career that he wrote a true account of our foolish frolic—somewhat embroidered, perhaps, but readable and humorous—and equipped it with a well-reasoned sentence or two by way of conclusion, apologizing for it as an unpremeditated freak, by which a good lesson might be read to would-be 'Cleons, Catilines, and Cobbetts' of the nineteenth century. The narrative was accepted by *Bentley's Miscellany*, then one of the leading London magazines, and a man of Jerome's sanguine and careless temperament thought he perceived in it a vista of emolument and distinction in a literary career, which did not tend to make him less indolent and irresponsible in his Oxford studies.

He made his mark at the Union, where he obtained a place upon the committee by a handsome majority over men of some eminence in the University, and since then in the world, although subsequently he was unable to grasp the more coveted distinction of the Presidential chair.

It was generally believed in the University that his failure to obtain this position, the blue ribbon of the oratorical life of Oxford, was the outcome of a piece

of bad judgment on his part in a dispute at the Union some little time before, which has never been recounted with the circumstantial detail to which the eminence of some of the actors in it might entitle it.

In 1848, after the Liberal (and Rugby) ascendancy at the Union Society had been shattered by a new party of High Church and Protectionist sympathies, the victors, as not infrequently happens, fell out among themselves. The late Canon Portal, who had been the originator of the raid, was in due course elected President; but he was a Tory of the Tories, and the more moderate men of his following distrusted his policy. Consequently, one of his own lieutenants proposed an opposition list for the committee, substituting for two names of personal friends of the President those of Jerome and Elmer, another of our allies. The opposition was successful.

This defeat galled the autocratic President to the quick, and he speedily raked up an obsolete regulation which entrapped Elmer, always a crotchety subject, into a breach of rule which cost him his seat on the committee; to which one of the defeated candidates was forthwith appointed by Portal.

This high-handed proceeding converted the President's old allies into enemies, and a vote of censure to be moved upon Portal's completion of office was determined on.

I was entrusted with the task, and set myself to execute it with as little personal recrimination as possible, not only because I was a friend of his in everyday life, but because I knew the temper of the assembly before whom I had to plead. I therefore was strictly judicial in my tone when at length the subject was debated, and equally so was my seconder, Knatchbull, afterwards Lord Brabourne. This plan of campaign seemed likely to prove successful, for two old members of committee (Christ Church men, upon whom Portal chiefly relied for support), W. H. Milman and Ward Hunt, the same who became Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lord Beaconsfield, sided with us. But unluckily a younger Christ Church member of committee, then known as Lord Robert Cecil, in the course of an animated vindication of the ex-President, drew from Jerome an excited interruption, which he repelled with just indignation, whereupon our friend, whom we had endeavoured to keep in the background, knowing his intense animosity to Christ Church generally and to the ex-President in particular, as well as his more honourable feeling that Elmer had been sacrificed to the dislike entertained to a man too formidable to be meddled with, sprang to his feet and commenced a philippic, which soon culminated in a general wrangle, and put the original question entirely out of sight. We were beaten in

a house of nearly 200 voters by a majority of twenty.

I remember that when I was leaving I complained to a friend (a man who bore a famous name) of our unfair defeat.

'Yes,' he replied, 'that Wyecheater man did for you. I came down intending to vote on your side, but after that blackguardly row with Cecil, I voted against you.'

This incident did Jerome no good with either section of the Union, and when he was nominated for President he was opposed and defeated by nearly three to one.

Yet he still was a man of mark in University circles. His speeches were scholarly as well as fluent, and his talents could not be ignored even by those who held

'The having learnt Greek trimeters to scan,
That first grand glory for which God made man,'

but their suspicions were aroused by his frivolity, and, dull themselves, they doubted the genuine ring of his brilliant metal. He used to quote lines from a mock Newdigate poem which he declared he had sent in, the subject being the Sandwich Islands :

'Within these isles there grows but little wood,
Therefore they build no ships—they wish they could,'

was one specimen couplet, but the finale was the gem of the production ; it described Cook's arrival :

'They brought to him slices of ham and tongue
With bread, which from the trees spontaneous hung :
The hero takes the gifts, and kindly smiles,
And aptly christens them—the Sandwich Isles !'

The prophets of ill who foretold that a man who could write such rhymes would never get a first were correct. Wasted time cannot be regained by a sudden burst of industry ; his certain first had long dwindled to a possible second, and now culminated in an actual third class.

It is not improbable that he did injure his chances of distinction by some levity or other. A thin-skinned or dull-witted examiner has been known to detect sarcasm in a flippant sentence—

'The thief doth think each bush an officer'

—where the writer only meditated escape from a present difficulty, and to resent the imagined wrong. Jerome was just the sort of catechumen who would produce such an answer impudent, as the 'Art of Pluck' denominates it. At any rate, he treated his failure very lightly, consoling himself with the well-known saying that more third-class than first-class men have made a figure in the world, and no doubt sincerely rejoicing that, all idea of a Fellowship with its contingent residence in Oxford being now out of the question, he would perforce be fated to take up his abode in London, and to find his future sphere of action at the Bar.

Some of his wiser friends considered the misfortune by no means irremediable, as his talent was of a quality more suited to the life of a metropolis than to that of a college. He had plenty of ability to make a good start as an advocate ; indeed, a leading attorney, to whom I introduced him one day, gratified me much by saying that he certainly should take an early opportunity of giving my young friend a brief, while he amused me equally by the reason he assigned, that a man who carried such an amplitude of shirt front would be certain to impress a jury. For some time after his call to the Bar these good auguries showed signs of fulfilment. He not only conducted one or two trifling cases with credit, but in conjunction with a friend he published a historical work involving a considerable amount of literary labour, and performed his portion of the task with ability and accuracy.

With this publication, alas ! began his evident decadence. The Museum reading-room—it was, of course, the old reading-room, an apartment as widely different to the present immense and well-arranged rotunda as the sanded floor of the last house but one on the right-hand side of the way in the second court off Cheapside, where Samuel Weller once took Mr. Pickwick, is to the luxuriously carpeted restaurant of the Hotel Savoy or Cecil—was the haunt in those

easier and less crowded days of a set of literary men, some of no small eminence, who prided themselves on preserving the convivial traditions of Porson and Maginn.

When that delightful volume of parodies yecept 'Bon Gualtier' was preparing, one of the two distinguished Scotsmen who produced it wrote a short poem, 'The Dirge of the Drinker,' of which he desired the proof-sheets to be taken to his colleague, a celebrated professor and poet. Aytoun first told the boy to take it away, but as his glance fell upon the page, and familiar turns of speech met his eye in every line, he exclaimed :

'Ha, what's this? Yes, good—very good. Oh, mine—mine without doubt—and I must have been tipsy when I wrote it!'

Of a similar turn of mind was Roderick Galloway, Jerome's co-author in the production of 'Chronicles of Cabinets,' who held with the Highland minister quoted by Scott, that it was no crime to drink 'as other gentlemen do.'

But *noctes ambrosianæ* are bad preparatives for steady work, and poor Jerome began to slide downward daily. Among other items of hack-work which he did for a well-known West-End publisher, the diary of a certain officer during a famous campaign was entrusted to his charge, to work up and amplify

into a historical autobiography; and while I could not held admiring the ready pen by which he clothed a meagre skeleton of facts with a distinct personality, when I came to a vivid description of the writer's emotions on first beholding sunrise on the horizon of a Russian steppe (of which there was not even a hint in the original), I could not forbear a laughing congratulation upon the skilful imagination with which he had depicted such a scene, considering that he had never been up at sunrise in his life.

'Oh yes, I have,' was the reply. 'I have seen the sun rise over Waterloo Bridge when I had not been to bed the night before.'

For a brief season also he was able to flesh his literary sword on the carcasses of certain second-rate popular men of letters in the pages of a magazine, conducted by his friend Galloway at the expense of a gentleman who had a grievance against the Administration of that period. One of his victims was Mr. Cuthbert Bede, whose 'Verdant Green' Jerome, as a real Oxford man, held in high abhorrence, asserting that, instead of the true traditions of the venerable University, he had invested his imaginary college with the 'lath-and-plaster associations of his own academy,' Durham, to wit.

I forget now whether it was in this review or on some other occasion that Bradley was gibbeted for

having quietly appropriated verbatim two or three pages of a forgotten essay of Theodore Hook's without acknowledgment; but probably this was the period of his detection, for in 'Verdant Green' he quotes Reynolds Hole's exquisite parody 'Smoke not,' with very scanty reference to its authorship. It illustrates the easy-going indolence of my hero that the credit of this article (which made some success) was claimed by another writer, a great fat rascal who, without Falstaff's wit, had all his mendacity and impudence, while Jerome never made any serious attempt to traverse the assumption. Only a few months elapsed, however, before the 'capitalist,' a retired naval officer who financed the venture, grew tired of airing his spleen against the Admiralty at so expensive a rate, and sold his magazine to one of the lower order of publishers, illiterate and sordid.

Jerome used to describe with considerable humour the scenes between Galloway and the new proprietor; and I have a lively recollection of some verses which were in type at the time of his accession to the editorial chair, in the second line of which occurred the word 'café.' Pronouncing this word like *safe*, the sage exclaimed, '*Cafe*—that don't scan!' and consigned them to the waste-paper basket. I need hardly say that one number finished the existence of the unlucky magazine under the new management.

Literary work of this kind is at best but a poor substitute for a regular profession, but it suited Jerome's taste far better than even the very moderate degree of regularity and application which practice at the Bar entails. He became, indeed, so casual and irregular as to forfeit his position at more than one office where he had obtained tolerably lucrative engagements.

He still retained that knack for epigrammatic personalities which he had cultivated at Oxford, and it stood him in good stead in political warfare, so that he occasionally went down to a constituency where a candidate of his own party complexion required the services of a fluent and unscrupulous bottle-holder, and in this way earned a few guineas.

Without harping upon the melancholy detail of the life of a literary man who has 'gone under,' I think I ought to refer to two episodes of some humorous interest, not without reference to certain incidents which figure in the journals of to-day.

I once received a letter from poor Jerome written in the most buoyant spirits, informing me that he had obtained the post of editor of a first-class magazine, the organ of an educational syndicate, from whose offices in a fashionable West-End thoroughfare it was issued. Light work, good pay, and a charming business room were his portion.

'They must have a University man,' wrote he,

'and a Wyechester classman was irresistible. So here I am; the old jade Rhedyeina has done me a good turn at last, and I won't forget those who have helped me before. I have a managing director, who takes me about in a carriage and pair, and makes me drink hock, compared to which that ancestral tap so extolled by Beaumanoir is mere ditchwater. Come and see me, ride in the carriage, and drink the wine.'

I was not able then to accept the invitation, and when in a subsequent letter he mentioned the name of his employer, I began to smell a rat, for the name was that of a man of my own college, who had been sentenced to penal servitude for forgery and released on ticket-of-leave. The crash speedily came; a raid was made upon the office by some of the poor clerics and schoolmasters who had been robbed of their money on various pretexts, and Jerome narrowly escaped arrest, the real delinquents having prudently kept aloof.

Soon after this he was attacked by a person belonging to a genus not yet extinct, an order of men who combine considerable erudition as antiquaries with unscrupulous greed and absolute disregard of honesty. One of the very worst specimens of this class was Mr. Peafoul, a person who had the audacity to head his name-card with a royal crown and the inscription 'Genealogist to Her Majesty.' This individual (who was forbidden the reading-room

of the British Museum for sundry malpractices) had recently published a book upon English families, in which all those who had declined to assist the publication by their subscriptions were gibbeted as not entitled to arms, or twitted with the fact that their ancestors had presented themselves at the Heralds' Visitations and disclaimed armorial bearings to save their fees.

Waylaying Jerome as he emerged from the Museum reading-room, Peafoul, full of the oily importunity which alternated with ferocity in his transactions, placed before him an offer from a publisher to give his name to a new genealogical work in reply to, and correction of, the misstatements in Peafoul's 'Patronymies,' the name of the work lately published. 'I was staggered,' said Jerome to me, in describing the interview, 'and could only say, "I haven't the material." "But I have," said Peafoul, "and your publisher will pay me for it. All the people I have attacked are sure to subscribe to the other book, and the publicity will sell the surplus copies of mine. We gain both ways."' However, needy as Jerome was, he had too much horror of Peafoul to do his behest, and the worthy genealogist had to find some more compliant confederate.

In a particularly nauseous book of recollections published a few years ago, a painful detail of the

degradation of my poor friend was given to the public, but I have every reason to hope from the general untruthfulness of the chronicle that it was much exaggerated, nor, indeed, have I the heart to dwell upon the details, known to myself, of the straits to which he was reduced ; I should pass them over in silence, save that I have good reason to believe that one of his expedients to prolong existence at this stage of his career was to attend taverns where a discussion forum or a spouting club happened to be held, and to earn a meal by haranguing upon some topic of the day.

I do not know whether many of these schools for budding orators now survive, but in the earlier decades of the present half-century there were plenty of them in and about Fleet Street, and one, more quaint and original still, held at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, a monastic relic preserved from utter ruin by the exertions of a landlord of literary tastes, who occupied it as a tavern, and in medieval letters announced that 'Chivalric Gin' was sold there. Here, in a room consecrated to reminiscences of David Garrick and Edward Cave, the Sylvanus Urban of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the landlord, seated in an arm-chair supposed to have belonged to Samuel Johnson, presided over mimic debates, in which in happier days Jerome had taken his share with Galloway and other witlings of the time, and laughed with me at old

Bronterre O'Brien (a Costigan of Chartism), shaking a boozy finger of denunciation at the infamous middle-class, 'who poisoned Socrates, crucified the Saviour of the World, and imprisoned Me in Clerkenwell Jail.' And now he had sunk to that level himself.

I was walking up the Strand one day in the seventies, when I met a figure in which I recognised the erst-familiar lineaments of my friend, though shockingly changed, not so much by the cracked boots, the ragged-edged trousers, the surtout with whitened seams, and the stock and waistcoat pinned together to hide the lack of linen, as by the bloated and crowfooted cheeks, the grizzling hair and palsied hand, which told of the ravages wrought less by time than imprudence on the once gallant and debonair Skrimshire Jerome. I accosted him, and we turned into one of the quiet streets by the river, where we walked up and down for some time, for he would not take coffee with me, and I would not go into a tavern with him. But wretchedly broken down as he appeared, he was still full of buoyant talk.

He was a free man now again, he said—owed nothing—was poor indeed, but soon expected to get money from a publisher for a second edition of his book, and would have a lucrative engagement on a daily paper—besides, he had a seat in Parliament in view—and at parting he handed me over, in exchange

for a proffered loan of small amount, a printed document which absolutely, when I opened and read it, turned out to be an address to the electors of a suburban borough for the next Parliamentary vacancy. To one who had just parted from the scarecrow of past gentility, who was the author of this statement, there was something wellnigh pathetic in the absurdity of the appeal; and I could not keep my thoughts from travelling back to a certain burlesque proclamation which he had written at Oxford at the time of the French Revolution of 1848, of which the stereotyped catchwords irresistibly reminded me; while there was one personal statement running thus, 'My income is small, but sufficient for my necessities,' which equally suggested the borrowed half-crowns.

Truly there is a tragedy very near to farce often played around us. What the poor fellow meant by such a pronouncement, which must have cost him money in the printing, for credit he had none to pledge, I cannot imagine; nor did I ever discover, for a few weeks later I took up one of the cheaper evening journals, and read the following paragraph: 'We regret to announce the death of Mr. Skrimshire Morton Jerome, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, who was removed to the Marylebone Workhouse Infirmary from his lodgings on Thursday last, in an unconscious condition, and expired without recovering his faculties

yesterday. The deceased gentleman was well known at one period of his life as a lecturer and essayist, and as a political writer of much pungency and considerable power of personal satire, in which he occasionally overstepped the license usually accorded to disputants. He was joint author with Mr. Galloway of "*Chronicles of Cabinets*," a useful historical work, and has been a contributor to several of the leading magazines. He was in his forty-seventh year.'

Even in this bald and brief summary how much wreckage of power can be traced! In the prime of life he was alone, a pauper, his abilities squandered, his prospects forfeited; he died forgotten, while men of far inferior ability and less advantageous connections had passed him in the race of life, and when their hour had come had a tale of good work done to be told of them, and grateful hearts to keep their memory green.





ELMER'S END.

A HOUSE OF COMMONS STORY.

IN the retrospect of half a century nothing seems more marvellous to a septuagenarian than the total change in the ways and means of English travel, which has come about since the iron road superseded

Macadam, and the clang and whirl of the locomotive engine replaced the music of the Tantivy trot, sung in our fathers' days by Rowland Warburton.

This supersession did not, however, become instantaneously complete. It was probably to the advantage of the country at large that the network of rails which now enmeshes Britain came into existence after the two other systems of internal communication which had preceded it were brought to perfection. So at least, I think, we should be told by visitors from America or Australia, for the dwellers in the remoter regions of the West or Southern Continent, out of the direct track of the iron horse, well know the constant inconvenience caused to the population by the absence of navigable channels, and the prevalence of corduroy roads, somewhat akin to the ditches in which the Member for Monmouth in the last century assured the House of Commons his constituents were in the habit of travelling.

Yet more than fifty years ago the rivalry of the canal and road carriers exercised enough influence in Great Britain to be able to restrict railway enterprise to great centres of population, whither those who wished to avail themselves of the superior comfort and speed of the railway carriage on the route to the Metropolis had to make their way by public or private conveyances at the cost of a détour

which sometimes measured many miles. The railway officials themselves at that time scarcely contemplated the possibility of having to deal with an occasional crowd, such as they have daily to arrange for now. They booked each passenger by name, and issued written tickets bearing numbers corresponding to the places in the coaches, as they still chose to call them, which (as may be seen in engravings of that date) were designated by titles similar to those borne by the vehicles they were superseding—the Alert, the Highflyer, and the like—while on their doors and panels were emblazoned in gilt letters the names of the principal towns on the way. The guard in charge of the mails still adhered to the scarlet gold-laced coat and white beaver hat of the four-in-hand times; and the platform, even of a terminus as important as that at Birmingham, with not more than two or three dozen passengers intent upon the stowing away of their heavy baggage upon the roofs of the carriages, presented a primitive appearance difficult to imagine in the present day.

This, about 1840, was the scene of my first meeting with Gerald Elmer, whose father—a well-known Chalkshire squire—had been at Rugby with mine in the days before Arnold. I was on my way to my appearance at Westminster School, where my new acquaintance had already completed a year, his

parent, as well as mine, being too stanch a Tory to approve of the 'innovation' system, and young Elmer (whose family residence was full thirty miles from ours) having repaired to Birmingham as his most convenient starting-place by rail to London.

The Elmers of Elmer were well-known county magnates of the second head: 'a good family, not an old family,' as Hatton (the maker of peers) says in Disraeli's 'Sybil.' The first of the landed Elmers had been, in fact, bailiff to an abbey at the dissolution of the monasteries; had laid out some of his savings in the purchase of part of the abbey lands, and had thriven.

In the teeth of that silly irreligious book, the 'History of Sacrilege,' I am prepared to maintain that the fortunes of families settled upon Church lands have not been found to differ in any essential degree from those of their neighbours. The ordinary tenure of any estate by one name is four generations, at the expiration of which period, unless some recuperative accident intervenes to carry on the patronymic, the estate follows the distaff, to use the phrase of old heralds, by the marriage of an heiress, or a male owner sells the property. In the first event, no doubt, the husband of the heiress may take her name, and so Baylys become Pagets, and

Hammonds Lucys, and Meadows Pierreponts, and masquerade to the undiscerning public as the old stock; but that Earl of Aylesford who was the seventh Heneage Finch in descent from father to son is an almost solitary exception to the doctrine of chances, even in the case of as many John Smiths.

Twice did the Elmers renovate their line. A younger son in Charles II.'s days became a physician of eminence, having the audacity to prescribe cold water, externally applied, to many of his patients. Perhaps, if the rage for erecting statues to bygone worthies of unacknowledged merit should continue, the next generation may see a statue of Dr. Erasmus Elmer, in a tub, like Diogenes, ornamenting one of the public places of London. As this worthy's elder brother, a courtier of the type familiar to readers of Grammont, died without an heir, he succeeded to the family estate, which he fertilized with his professional earnings; his son again became a successful lawyer, a judge, and a peer, but having no child, bequeathed what had now become a large property to another nephew, the son of a clerical Elmer, a philosopher who had come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as an external world, that his church, his *placens uxor*, his family, and all his surroundings (including his brother, the mighty and ennobled

squire himself), were only images, or rather pleasing mental impressions.

This peculiar dogma, which he advanced and insisted upon in several folio volumes, now rare, caused the good man to be somewhat more inattentive to his weekly bills than he would have been, perhaps, could he have looked upon the butcher and the baker in a more substantial light than as 'eidola' of the brain, and their unsatisfied claims as something more than perplexing phenomena, that it behoved him to contemplate in the calm silence of reflection. Being myself a believer in heredity, it often amused me to trace the eccentric speculations of his forefather in the crudities which formed so considerable a part of Gerald Elmer's opinions and utterances, and in his conduct of life, for I do not suppose that he read a line of the ancestral writings, and I believe that he would have heartily scoffed at them had he done so; while there was nevertheless a great similarity in thought and action between the visionary of the days of Queen Anne and the politician of the days of Queen Victoria.

With all my hereditary reverence for his family, and the strongest desire to make much of my new acquaintance, I am bound to say that my first impression of his personal appearance was that he was no Adonis. He had been born with that horrid dis-

figurement, a hare-lip, and though surgery had done its best by uniting the gash, a palpable scar remained, accompanied by a guttural indistinctness of utterance so often identified with that deformity. Another infantile accident had left its mark upon one of his eyes, which gave a strange fixed vacant stare to one side of his profile. His hair, too, was of that undeterminate hue which evoked the sarcasm of Becky Sharp in her first letter from Queen's Crawley; while, though he boasted a sturdy frame with well-developed chest and arms, he was like some of the eminent pugilists whom I used to see in those days—'shipwrecked' about the lower limbs, and unmistakably knock-kneed. He was by no means ill-natured, though, of course, he treated me as not yet advanced to the dignity of a public schoolboy, who had been tossed in a blanket—

'Memento turbinis exit
Marcus Dama'

—and spoke with the bluff condescension of the big dog to the little dog. He occupied our five hours' journey, which we thought in those days a marvel little short of flying, in indoctrinating me into the numerous items of the complicated etiquette still in vogue at that ancient seat of learning to which we were bound, where at that time the inflexibly rigid traditions of the earliest classical schools—the

Busbeian landmarks—('A great man : he whipped my grandfather—a very great man,' as Sir Roger de Coverley interjected on seeing his monument in Westminster Abbey)—existed in their full entirety.

The old Anglo-Saxon public school, patronized and revived by Queen Elizabeth, to which we were both bound, was an interminable theme of converse—curiosity, on my part, to know something of the unknown region, with a language, manner and discipline of its own as rigid as those of the midshipman's berth in a man-of-war at the era of Marryat's novels; on his, the pride which a boy was sure to feel who had joined, from his allotted place in the brilliant throng which crowded the Abbey at the coronation of Queen Victoria, his voice to the acclaim of his schoolmates in their cry of 'Vivat Regina !'

The school was low in numbers and lagging in scholarship in those days, but I have often thought that had a man of real genius, imbued with perspicuity enough to see how capable of expansion its ancient traditions were, filled its preceptorial seat, there were elements of brilliant success in its surroundings; and that the judgment of one of the distinguished Church dignitaries who adorned its ranks at that period was deeply true when, in his later years, he said, 'I shall never forget my oblige-

tions to Westminster. The river made me a man, and the Abbey made me a Churchman.'

To return to Gerald Elmer's talk. He gave me bluntly to understand that I had better not let the head-master know that I had been his fellow-traveller, or I might chance to have him for my substance; 'in which case,' he continued, 'you will have a sound buckhorsing if you get me into any scrape.' The meaning of this enigmatical threat was that every neophyte was consigned to the tutelage of some boy already in the school for the space of one week, during which period the shortcomings of the shadow, or tyro, were credited to the preceptor, or substance, and visited with penalties upon the latter.

Even in those juvenile days I was a student of English literature, and could not refrain from saying: 'I suppose Buckhorse, the fighting man, is your name for a punch on the head?'

'Yes, or a box on the ear,' quoth Elmer, launching a playful cuff at me, which I parried in as good an imitation of the style of the Tipton Slasher, the idol of the population of that district designated by Montalembert *le pays noir*, as I could muster.

'Aha, young un,' said my new friend, 'you know something about sparring, eh? You'll have to put on the gloves when we get up Grant's. But what do you know about Buckhorse?'

'Well,' I said, 'he is mentioned in the "Connoisseur," or one of the British essayists, at any rate; and I think I have read of him in Walpole's "Memoirs."'

'I don't mind memoirs, but I hate a muzz' (a bookworm). 'Books are mostly lies, invented for the benefit of schoolmasters.'

'What,' I exclaimed, 'do you never read?'

'School work I am obliged to get up, you know; and I like reading true history, like the "Mysteries of the Court of London"' (a publication of the then notorious G. W. M. Reynolds); 'there you get an idea what rascals great people are.'

'And novels?'

'Blue books? Yes; they are better than other books, because they don't pretend to be true. But I hope the time will come when I shall have useful work to do in the world, and have no need to read any more, except to learn what is going on. Books spoil the independence of men's minds.'

I was by this time in a maze of perplexity as to my schoolfellow's sanity; but as he talked on we reached Chalk Farm, where the terrors then entertained by Londoners of the new mode of locomotion compelled us to leave our engine behind, and to be dragged into the terminus at Euston by a cable. The haste of reclaiming our possessions and depositing them in

one of those rusty, musty, fusty vehicles yclept a hackney coach (but more correctly designated by our forefathers as 'miserics'), in which we rumbled and stumbled through St. Giles's, Charing Cross, and Whitehall, to Dean's Yard, afforded no opportunity for more conversation.

Our journey, nevertheless, must have begotten a liking for each other, which is more often the product of mutual independence of thought than of professed community of sentiment.

When the period of shadowdom had passed, and I found myself at liberty to select my associates, there was no one for whose company I had a stronger partiality than Gerald Elmer, and he responded to my readiness for his companionship by a frank interchange of ideas. His unconventional habit of mind made him a quaint and original talker; and a certain obstinate simplicity (which is a very different thing, be it noted, from simple obstinacy) was clearly the secret of the directness of purpose which evidenced itself in his actions, though reluctantly put forward in his ordinary conversation. While he was highly loyal to his home traditions, and strictly observant of school discipline in all its details, he would constantly, at unexpected moments, reveal his utter loathing towards the studies of the school, which he considered as worse than waste of time, employed in reading books

which were manifestly untrue, and accepting statements equally fictitious. For instance, he would say: 'They teach us that the earth is round, when our eyes tell us unmistakably that it is flat; and insist on our believing that the sun stands still, while we see it rise every morning. When old Matthew Mattocks' (our slang name for the arithmetic master) 'lectures us in this way, I feel quite indignant. Even when I was at a private school, there was a German boy who kept on telling us that we breathed nothing but gas; and though at last I did punch the lying little beggar's head, the old Doctor caned me for it. The fact is, they are all in a tale together, and afraid to contradict what books say, be it true or false. I am looking forward to the time when I shall have real business, which will give me plenty to do without this sickening bookwork.'

But though he thus stolidly enrolled himself under the banner of the Caliph Omar, or of that hermit of Prague visited by King Gorbuduc, who felicitated himself on never having seen pen or ink, Elmer could not be classed with those muscular public-school Christians whose creed is confined to rowing and football. On the contrary, though a more than respectable performer both on the river and at 'fields,' no one took more advantage of the privilege inherent in the position of Queen Eliza's foundation, of the

freedom of Westminster Hall, then the seat of the Law Courts, and of the Houses of Parliament; and many an hour have I spent in Elmer's company in the seats below the bar in the old House of Commons, to which in those early days, when the demands upon the accommodation for visitors to the debates were infinitesimally small compared with the present, we, Queen's scholars of the royal foundation of St. Peter's, were allowed to have access.

Elmer, true to his practical view of life, had imbibed a very clear notion that low prices for produce meant ruin to the agricultural interest, and had mastered with marvellous accuracy the complexities of tariffs and budgets; but he was not a political partisan, characterizing the occupants of the front benches on either side impartially as a set of humbugs. His sympathy and enthusiasm were reserved for the diatribes of some thoroughgoing Protectionist orator like Mr. Ferrand; while to the burning question of Ministerial policy at that date—the Maynooth proposals of Sir Robert Peel—he had all the antipathy of a hereditary true-blue Protestant. I can hardly tell whether any unformulated visions of future senatorship had dawned in Elmer's brain. I did once ask a young gentleman, a fellow-traveller in a railway journey, who had informed me that he was at Westminster School, what his destination in life was

to be, and was reduced to astonished silence by his reply, 'A member of Parliament'—a declaration which, it is satisfactory to know, he carried out to the letter, as for many years he sat with credit in the Lower House, and now occupies an honourable position in the upper one; but I imagine the dreams of youth are scarcely formulated in most cases to such an extent. Elmer, anyhow, was fond of attending the House not only on field-nights, but when ordinary business was going on; and thereby I gained the advantage of coming in for some of those minor (often unexpected) incidents which are far more characteristic of the real spirit of the Legislature than the full-dress debates are. I not only heard, for example, the stormy scene between Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Cobden, when the Prime Minister charged the Anti-Corn Law leader with inciting to assassination, and had to apologize; but I saw Mr. Walter, of the *Times* (father of the late Mr. John Walter), stand at the bar to receive the Speaker's reprimand for an article in which he exposed the composition and denounced the partisan decisions of committees appointed to hear petitions, so well characterized in Warren's novel 'Ten Thousand a Year.'

But my favourite reminiscence is of a figure clad in the florid style affected by dandies in the forties, his ringleted locks descending to the collar of a blue coat

adorned with gilt buttons, two or three waistcoats of brilliant hues, primrose-coloured kid gloves upon his hands, and his wristbands turned over his coat-cuffs, who suddenly started up from a back-bench on the Conservative side of the House, and assailed the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston in a fluent, flippant, off-hand style, very different to the usual ponderous House of Commons canter. Who was that gentleman who spoke before Mr. Bernal Osborne? we asked the good-natured janitor, who was so often kind to us boys. 'Oh, that was a Mr. Disraeli' (accent on the *e*), was his reply. 'He writes books' (a groan from Elmer emphasized the enormity). 'We don't think much of him!' And this was our first introduction to Lord Beaconsfield.

'What are the beatitudes of a scholastic paradise? To be fagged, flogged, thumped, coerced to mental labour, and constrained in personal liberty. This may be all very proper and salutary (so is physic), but it is not happiness; and there is very rarely an instance of a boy, while he is in one of these prisons for the body and treadmills for the mind, who is not always wishing to get out of it and go home.' So wrote Elmer to me when he quitted Westminster; and though the passage was not his own, for I have found it since in Colman's 'Random Recollections,' it expressed his view of school life pretty clearly. He

had developed under this Spartan system into a fair classical scholar, by rote merely, without the slightest fancy for his work, a rigid, but good-natured monitor, and a dry, unsocial, manly fellow, more truthful than polite. His one great exploit was that he reduced the headmaster to astonished silence one day by declining his invitation to dinner. It was proffered with all the calm condescension of a royal command, and Elmer's grave reply, without a shadow of impertinence, was a question if he were at liberty to say No. I think our kindly pedagogue had a misgiving that he had hardly made the well-meant advance in a sufficiently cordial manner, for he hastily replied in the affirmative with a certain air of apologetic confusion, and the subject was allowed to drop. The incident, however, got wind, and had Elmer been less self-possessed and less reticent than he was, it might have placed him in a false position; but his extremely matter-of-fact response to all questions upon the subject did not encourage prolonged discussion of it, and it only survived as a myth of schoolboy legend long after its hero had become an old Westminster.

My own sole difference with my friend was also very characteristic. Coming one day down the wide shallow stairs which led out of school, I felt myself propelled violently forward by a rough grasp fastened on my coat-collar, my struggles being quite useless.

When we reached the plane surface of Dean's Yard, Elmer's voice grumbled in my ear, 'You young idiot! what do you mean by telling fellows you have red hair? My hair is ever so much redder than your hair, and my hair's not red!' In after-days this paradoxical complaint seemed often to be the clue to some of Elmer's empirical axioms; but at that moment it struck me as so unreasonable, especially when enforced by a savage dig in the ribs, that I made rather a sulky reply, and so disgusted my friend, who expected an ample retraction upon the spot, that we actually did not speak for a couple of days, and when our intimacy was renewed, we mutually avoided the topic so long as Elmer remained at school.

When I proceeded to Oxford, about half a year after him, I found that my schoolfellow's sinewy strength had already obtained for him a place in the University boat, for which in those days there was no systematic mode of selection such as the trial eights afford now. Fifty years ago the sole responsibility for his crew rested with the captain, and as Eton and Westminster then contended annually, a captain educated at one of these schools was generally best acquainted with the merits of freshmen hailing from the other. Thus it came to pass that Elmer, whose pluck as well as prowess on the river had already excited attention, was selected to take an oar in the race of 1845 against

Cambridge, before he had even an opportunity of rowing in his college racing-boat. That such a thing should now be impossible is doubtless right, but Elmer was probably at the time as judicious a choice as could be made, disastrous as was that race to Oxford.

The scene at Putney, now that half a century has elapsed, is worth bringing to mind, as this was the first race between the Universities rowed over the modern course, the previous ones having been rowed from Westminster to Putney ; and, moreover, it was the last race in the old-fashioned cutters before the introduction of outriggers.

The day fixed was Saturday, March 14, and, from some want of calculation of the state of the tides, the start had to be postponed to the hour of 5.30 p.m. In the dreary dusk of the chilliest of afternoons, a bitter east wind rolling up snow-clouds, and large fragments of floating ice flecking the surface of the stream, the crews embarked after a delay of twenty minutes, which in the then state of the weather was truly vexatious, in the presence of about two hundred shivering spectators upon the rickety old wooden bridge, and as many more afloat, most of these latter being on board three steamers ; two supposed to be official, and the third chartered by members of B. N. C., to which college the Oxford captain belonged. From the very start Cambridge went ahead, and were

never really pressed, winning by at least eight lengths, Oxford, who had only rowed over the course once—the day before—being (as the newspaper critics discovered after the event) inferior both in style and preparation. The cold was most intense, and some of the Oxford crew, the captain said in his version of the race, could hardly hold their oars. A story afterwards current in college was that the man who occupied the thwart in front of Elmer was one of the sufferers, and that he exclaimed in the extremity of his misery, 'I shall die—I shall die;' my friend, who rowed like grim death, responding with a growl, 'I wish you would!' At the finale of the race the scene resembled a view in the Arctic regions; the rapidly darkening gloaming, the snow on either shore, and the black, ice-spotted stream, made a very image of desolation. The unlucky Oxford men missed the boat with their warm clothes, and were fain to turn their craft's nose downstream, and row literally for bare life. Our B. N. C. boat was hailed by the Westminster eight, which had been swamped, the crew begging a lift home; but their jackets had frozen to the bottom of their cutter, so we had to find spare great-coats and rugs to keep them warm. The next morning, Sunday, March 15, the floating ice, stopped by the narrow arches of old Putney Bridge, froze in a solid mass from shore to shore.

This was Elmer's only essay in the University eight, although he continued to do yeoman's service in the boat of his own college. I do not think he was asked to row again for Oxford, but the general impression was that he refused on account of an incident which gave him great umbrage. A strict sumptuary law always is, if unwritten, current at Oxford : fashions change, no doubt, yet the pioneers of novelty are invariably in disfavour. Close shaving was the rule of those days, and a whisker which exceeded the mutton-chop dimensions was an eyesore of extreme malignity. But Elmer, in imitation, I think, of his then political idol, Lord George Bentinck, was endeavouring to cultivate whiskers of the pattern familiar in Leech's pictures, and the once popular dramatic character, Lord Dundreary. This was an abomination in the eyes of our crew, and the captain, a day or two before the race, committed an assault upon one of the hirsute appendages with a pair of scissors which he had secreted in his pocket. Elmer took the matter coolly, but scarcely good-temperedly, and we were not surprised at his being absent from the crew which represented Oxford at Henley that summer.

He struck out for himself a new line, unexpected by most of his friends. He became a frequent and, with certain limitations, a favourite speaker at the

Union Debating Society. Years afterwards an Oxford parodist wrote :

' We'll quit the river for the room,
The oar for books well fingered,
Go in for Hallam and for Hume,
And loiter over Lingard.'

But at that time ' blues ' were not rife in the Union, and Elmer started with thus much prestige in his favour. He succeeded so far in subduing the rough indistinctness of his utterance as to be compared, admiringly or sarcastically, as tastes varied, to Demosthenes with pebbles in his mouth. He cultivated all the graces and decorations of Parliamentary oratory to an extent which, if it sometimes excited the derision of his more judicious hearers, tickled the groundlings vastly, and made him highly popular with that class who like to laugh at, if they cannot laugh with, a speaker ; nor was he deterred by superabundance of modesty from expressing strong opinions upon any subject of debate, his quaint straightforwardness often scoring a palpable hit with dramatic effect. He still posed as a Tory, or rather as a Protectionist of an independent type, and a high Protestant Orangeman of the no-surrender tradition.

When Mr. Gladstone first came forward in 1847 as a candidate for the Parliamentary representation of the University, Elmer gave notice of a motion that Mr. Round (the Tory and Low Church candidate)

was more deserving of our support, and not a little to my consternation applied to me to second his proposition. In vain I excused myself, stating with truth that, when the choice was for an academical constituency, I was by no means sure that I had an unqualified preference for a worthy Essex squire of orthodox sentiments over so eminent a scholar as Mr. Gladstone, heretical as I considered his political views to be; and pleaded likewise, with absolute conviction, that the motion would be rejected by a large majority, even were the Liberals to abstain from voting.

Elmer retorted with so strong a personal appeal not to desert him, that I finally agreed to comply with his request, but as I could not commend the subject of his advocacy very heartily, I had to fall back upon the old device of an attack upon the 'plaintiffs attorney'; in other words, I resorted to the *ad captandum* argument that, if Mr. Gladstone had abandoned his professed principles upon the question of Free Trade, he might in future repeat the tergiversation upon those very points which formed, in the opinion of his Conservative supporters, his chief claim to their suffrages, and I recalled to their minds how already from the Radical camp

'Full many a fond expectant eye was bent
Where Newark's towers are mirrored in the Trent.'*

* 'Blackgowns and Redcoats, or Oxford in 1884. A Satire.'

Warming with my subject, and inspired by the mischievous spirit of burlesque, I proceeded, amidst applause which I judged to be ironical, and laughter which I feared was sarcastic, to show how, under Mr. Gladstone's auspices, our Church might be despoiled and our State disintegrated. But the speaker who followed me—then, as now, a Conservative of the highest sincerity and culture—commenced his speech by expressing his regret that any member of the Union should have demeaned himself to make, even in a spirit of levity, such unwarrantable insinuations against an honourable statesman. A quarter of a century later my friend had to confess that I had proved a true prophet. The result of the debate, as I had foreseen, was the rejection of Elmer's motion by an overwhelming majority. Yet, isolated as he might have been in his opinions, Elmer attained a distinct position in the University life of his day, and, if not in the very first flight of the intellectual course, held his own with the foremost of men who have since played an important part in contemporary history. He read steadily, though with constant lurking distaste for his work. His father's death, which occurred about this time, gave him the position in his own county of a landed proprietor of substance and standing, and his great ambition had ever been to take a lead in local public life. To this end he

yearned for a first class, although neither his college tutor nor his private coach gave him much hope, as his handwriting, cramped and irregular, was much upon a par with his defective vocal powers. His best friends only anticipated a third. But he did not improve his prospects by an ingenious system which he tried with results which might have been disastrous to the last degree. He informed me one day that, as he found his brain and his memory more active in the small hours which succeed midnight than at any other time, it was his intention to make the morning chapel (at that time compulsory) the end, not the beginning, of his working day, and to betake himself to rest at the hour when the college generally sat down to breakfast. For a week or two he 'revisited the glimpses' of the sun but seldom; and when we happened to meet him after morning chapel, or if he turned up, as he occasionally did, towards evening, getting his breakfast with our supper, he was always in the highest spirits at the success of his scheme. But gradually he became less regular in his daily bed-hours, and boasted that the restorer sleep itself was a luxury which might be dispensed with. One evening he arrived at a friend's rooms in a highly-elated mood, and was glibly recounting the number of working hours he could take out of the twenty-four, when an epileptic fit vindicated outraged nature, and a month's

perfunctory abstinence from work was required to set him on his legs again.

At length the ordeal came and was passed; but while he knew that he had not actually failed, his place in the list had yet to be determined. Few men had the nerve to inspect that fatal document, the class list, for themselves. Some friend generally awaited its publication and brought to the expectant's rooms the tidings of success or failure. It was my lot to perform this office for Elmer, and as I entered his room and saw by the expression of his face the tension of his nervous system, I could hardly summon courage to say: 'Prepare for a great disappointment.'

'What! only a second?' cried he.

He was in the fourth class!

So complete a breakdown carried with it in some degree the elements of consolation; some totally unforeseen misfortune must, he concluded, have been its cause; his handwriting, perhaps, which he could not deny made his best papers a hieroglyphical study, or perhaps the independence of some of his translations and criticisms. We both knew a man who forfeited a certain first because he could not resist the temptation to place against the request to write in Thucydidean Greek an account by a sailor in Nicias' fleet of the defeat at Syracuse this sarcastic note: 'The sailor, if a man of sense, would not write

home at all.' Elmer naturally fell back upon his old school quarrel with the classics and the curriculum generally, and shook the dust of Oxford from his feet.

London was our next meeting-place, Elmer being engaged upon the course of dinners in the Temple Hall, which to University men of that period formed the sole probation required for a call to the Bar. In his practical way, however, my friend spent some time in acquiring a knowledge of the rudiments of sessions law, and sought my co-operation in divers schemes for the promulgation of our Protectionist tenets. One of these was carried into execution, with the assistance of a veteran in literature, Pierce Egan, junior, who then filled the editorial chair at an office in the Strand, which to this day shares with Pontet's, in the Haymarket, and Birch's, in the City, the distinction of preserving its original shop-front, unaltered by plate-glass and lacquer. We printed broadsheets of caricatures against the Anti-Corn Law Leaguers; and though I fear the edge of our satire was somewhat dull, secretaries of Protectionist associations circulated them. Another project, for a sporting newspaper to rival *Bell's Life*, which was free-trading in its views, proved abortive, but gave the first hint of the successful *Field*.

It was in some measure a recognition of the value

of the services of this young free-lance of the country party that he and I were favoured with tickets for the platform at a great Protectionist gathering in Drury Lane Theatre, where the most powerful speaker was Isaac Butt, soon to be the leader of Irish Home Rulers. But I was far more interested, among the throng of gaitered yeomen and buff-waistcoated squires who filled the roomy stage, erst described by Nancy Lake as like a town, to discover the burly form of Henry Mayhew, the co-founder of *Punch* with Mark Lemon, and the pioneer of that regiment of authors who have dealt with pauperism in a picturesque style, though few of their books have attained the same measure of success as the original 'London Labour and the London Poor.' I could not suppress the question: 'You here, Mr. Mayhew?'

'Oh yes; and why not?'

'What does your client, the working man, say to your being a Protectionist?'

'My client, as you call him, knows nothing about the subject except in the light of the big loaf. If he understood the whole bearing of the case, he would be here too; and mark my words, if ever England should become a democracy, we shall reimpose Protective duties.'

I have lived to hear this sentiment confirmed by an ex-Cabinet Minister whose name was bracketed

with those of Cobden and Villiers in the earliest dawn of the Anti-Corn Law League.

But to return to my friend Elmer. Having been duly called to the Bar, he took up his residence in his ancestral home, and commenced his career as a country gentleman under the happiest auspices. His property was in good order; he was popular with his tenantry as an improving landlord of Protectionist convictions; while his knowledge of the world, and his readiness to take part in public work, made him acceptable in many other quarters. True to his purpose of doing good, all benevolent schemes had his advocacy, and he began to establish a reputation as an amiable young man of promise. The only fault his Chalkshire neighbours found with him was that, not having a wife, his house, instead of being open to the countryside, was the resort of a set of bachelor friends, whose acquaintance he had made at debating clubs in Oxford, or at 'moots' in the Temple; clever speakers, men connected with literature, who were not, in the eye of bucolic fogeydom, either by antecedents or opinions, suitable guests for a young squire who aspired to take a lead in the county. But this defect they expected he would outlive.

I think, too, that if these halcyon days had been prolonged, he would have fallen gradually into the groove of the society around him, man is so much

moulded by external influences; but a rude and sudden disturbance of his quiet occurred but a few years after my friend had taken up his abode at Elmer, by the untimely death of one of the members for that division of Chalkshire in which his house was situated. Elmer lost no time in issuing an address to the electors, in which, combined with a general adherence to the Protectionist party, he proceeded to express his views upon a variety of other topics, some of which certainly seemed at that period to be out of the region of practical politics. London newspapers were less in the habit of commenting upon election movements in the provinces then than they are now, but they broke their accustomed silence in the presence of a document which the leading journal thus summarized: 'Household Suffrage and No Free Trade; exclusive dealing in free cotton, and the restoration of the Navigation laws; the maintenance of our constitution unimpaired, and the repeal of the Union with Ireland, compose Mr. Elmer's *farrago libelli*. He appears to be a young man whose political education at present has only reached the Runnymede letters.'

The reference to Ireland, considering the date and circumstances of its appearance, is very singular. We had, it is true, a set of High Church Tories who were 'repealers' at Oxford, but they had been Elmer's most decided aversion; and I can only attribute the

idea to his strange passion for contradiction. Here are the very words: 'I hope the day may come when Ireland will be ruled over by a Prince of the Royal House; when he may have the privilege of summoning an Irish Parliament in Dublin, to legislate exclusively for the internal affairs of that country. By abolishing the so-called Act of Union, I would restore harmony.'

So little interest was felt in what was looked upon then as a mere eccentricity, that scarcely an allusion to this paragraph was made throughout the contest, for a contest there was. The county magnates, indignant at the presumption of the rash intruder who had dared to step forward without their celestial approval, invited the Hon. Percy Pontefract, a nephew of the Whig Lord-Lieutenant, to come forward as the Conservative candidate. This was a step most distasteful in every way to Elmer, who had been at Oxford with Pontefract, and remembered many of the jokes and jeers of which that hero had been the victim during his sojourn at the University. Those who know the eminent diplomat, Lord Pontefract, the very pink of courteous sagacity—'I should like to be as wise as that man looks,' said a distinguished observer once—can hardly imagine him the most transparent ninny in the whole University, the target of the easiest shafts of youthful petulance; when the

cheaper comic periodicals which flourished ere *Punch* had raised the standard of jocosse literature might have printed such a paragraph as, 'Elopement in High Life. The Hon. Percy Pontefract's bay mare with him in Nuneham Park,' which, feeble as it sounds, gave the keenest annoyance to the victim and the most vivid satisfaction to his tormentors. Trifles illustrate character, so the sort of man the Pontefract of those days was will be best portrayed by an incident of which I was witness, in the oyster-room at a hunt ball, the bivalves being left to be opened by the eaters thereof. The friend with whom I was talking drew my attention to an individual who, after a feeble attempt to illustrate that description of a badly-opened oyster in an old jest-book—you cut your hand, and swallow something between a periwinkle and a gravel walk—had given the attempt up as hopeless, and, hungrily prowling round the room, espied a plate where some fastidious eater had left the beards of his oysters in the opened shells, which exuvix Pontefract proceeded to devour with every symptom of relish.

'Fancy having a creature like that for an opponent!' was Gerry Elmer's indignant protest; and it was all we could do—we, meaning sundry old friends who had obeyed his summons to come and assist in his campaign—to make him exhibit even the ordinary

demonstrations of courtesy. 'Why should I shake hands with the little cad? I never did at Oxford; why should I now?' And it was only by an appeal to an authority which even Elmer respected, the practice of the P. R., that we overcame his refusal.

I wish that I had the ability of George Eliot to reproduce the comic side of a hot election contest in the fifties—my story would be really worth reading; to be heckled by Mrs. Poyser, and lampooned by Lawyer Dempster, was, no doubt, a novel and rather stimulating experience, but to my denser wits an atmosphere of unreality pervaded the proceedings, inasmuch as the difference between the professions of the two candidates was almost infinitesimal, so far as related to the topics which actually interested the voters. I doubt if there were a score of Irishmen to be attracted or repelled by Elmer's Home Rule anticipations, while Pontefract's didactics upon foreign policy never elicited a cheer. Like every other contest, so far as I can speak from experience, the vast patriotic issues were completely smothered by local interests and private prejudices. Elmer was well understood to be the independent tenant-farmers' candidate, while Pontefract was the nominee of the great landowners, and this broad distinction alone was ever present to the Chalkshire mind. In the country towns and larger villages our candidate

was the favourite, but the rural hamlets followed the squire and the parson, for the clergy were at best neutral and the majority openly hostile to Elmer, looking upon him as a man of latitudinarian and unsettled views. For the same reason the small percentage of avowed Liberals inclined to his side, though the more influential among them declined to vote at all, and some ardent Free Traders even supported his adversary, as a protest against the extreme tone of Elmer's Protectionist utterances. I am afraid that several of his younger abettors, to whom the affair was scarcely more serious than our playing at Parliament in the Union had been, took delight in out-Heroding Herod in our attacks on Free Traders.

'Time was, ere England's griefs began,
Each rood of ground maintained its man.
But what can it maintain, now it has to endure
Chemistry, Cobden, and other manure?'

may suffice as a specimen of a ditty noisily chorussed at many of Elmer's meetings. Our candidate, too, had a way, when brought to book on the subject of these unbated utterances, of becoming dogged, and showing that he could not command his temper. Now, Pontefract, on the other hand, prophesied smooth things to everyone at the dictation of his backers, and, being a well-mannered fellow, really

began to make way with the doubtful voters. It became evident, as the canvass approached its close, that the contest would be very severe, but of one point only were we absolutely certain—that we should have the best of the show of hands, which in those days of public nomination was an indispensable preliminary to the polling-booth. In this, at least, we were not disappointed, the farmers in their gigs, and the tradesmen and operatives of the market town where the nomination took place, making a goodly show on our side the hustings, far outnumbering the hired entourage of the Pontefract faction, although they outshone us equally in the number and rank of the superior denizens of the platform.

The speeches on both sides rivalled each other in abuse of the Anti-Corn Law League, and I only remember one indication of a possible want of unanimity on this score, when Pontefract's proposer wound up his peroration with a warning that, unless suitable members were sent to represent them, Englishmen might lose their Sunday's dinner of roast beef. A huge fellow in the rear of the concourse, whose marsupial outline was accentuated by a white apron, bawled out, 'It's none too much of that tackle we get already, mister!'

The show of hands was declared to be in favour of Gerald Elmer, Esquire, whereupon a poll was duly

demanding on behalf of the Hon. Percy Pontefract, to be taken on two days in the ensuing week. Every nerve was strained during the intervening hours to secure doubtful and stimulate reluctant voters, and at the opening of the poll the crowded state of every booth, of which there were eight, corresponding to the districts into which the constituency was divided, showed how keen was the excitement. The number of voters upon the register was little more than 4,000, and it was reckoned that deaths and duplicates took five per cent. from that number.

Varied and conflicting were the reports which arrived every hour at our central committee-room from the outlying districts. In one place we were well ahead, in the next Pontefract led by a large majority. At a late hour (the poll then closed at four o'clock), we found that the totals stood, Pontefract 1,774, Elmer 1,760, so that, more than 8,600 votes having been recorded, we were 14 behind. The electric telegraph was not yet in being, but we sent up to London by the evening train to say that if a certain railway clerk, a freeholder, favourable to Elmer, would come down and vote, a special train would be paid for, and equally energetic measures were taken in other directions to rally our reserves.

All in vain; we reduced the majority by three votes only, the state of the poll at the finish being

declared by the High Sheriff thus, Pontefract 1,903, Elmer 1,892; and it was calculated that only 20 more votes were in existence—a most extraordinary result, considering that no great question of public policy sundered the competitors, and that neither of them was supposed to be acceptable to voters of Liberal proclivities. However, Mr. Pontefract was declared duly elected, and was chaired, girt with a sword as knight of the shire, in the fashion of the good old time. Elmer behaved decorously enough under his defeat, only observing, when complimenting his antagonist upon his honourable behaviour, that if all concerned had imitated their candidate's conduct, the result might have been different. Nevertheless, he felt his defeat severely. His expenses were £2,000, and I am convinced that the successful candidate spent three times that sum.

Pontefract, by the way, did not long continue Member for Chalkshire, as he accepted a permanent office under the Liberal Government just before the next General Election. Having been elected, on his entrance to Parliament, a member of the Carlton Club, he still continued to frequent it after he had thus severed his connection with his party, much to the annoyance of some of the senior members of the committee. At that time there was a considerable amount of friction of a similar character in political

clubland, and Pontefract became quite a marked man on account of the calm cynicism with which he sustained the insinuated or expressed condemnation of his former political allies.

'I know when I am well off,' he told some of them, as he was entering the club one day, 'and nothing you can say shall prevent my coming here.'

Now, it so happened that a short time before, at the Chalkshire Agricultural Show, Pontefract's relative, the Lord-Lieutenant, had a pen of pigs disqualified because the farm bailiff had thought fit to stitch down their ears by way of improving their appearance. An old stager, well known by the sobriquet of Black Billy, less from his swarthy complexion than from his saturnine vein of comment, happened to be among the auditors of Pontefract's frank avowal: 'Oh, very well, sir,' retorted he, 'but I would advise you to do what your uncle did to his pigs, sew your ears down, that you may not hear what other fellows say about you.' The story became widely known, and had the desired effect.

Elmer was driven much nearer to his Radical friends by his defeat, which he stoutly maintained would have been impossible under the ballot, of which nostrum he forthwith became an advocate, and he also imbibed a determined aversion to the Established Church, with many of whose ministers

he contrived to quarrel during his canvass. 'Look,' said he, 'at a man like Thurible of Foston, indignantly alive to the ruin which Free Trade is sure to bring upon country incumbents, yet unable to give me a vote, because I am not sound on the "deceased wife's sister" question, while Huntingdon, on the other hand, whom I have been supporting because his High Church neighbours treat him so ill, regrets that he cannot consider me fit to be a Member of Parliament, when I am so little of a Christian as to wish to see museums open on Sundays. These men may well dislike to be called parsons, for hardly one of them is broad-minded enough to impersonate the tolerance of his own Church.'

The wily old Lord-Lieutenant assisted, too, in the capture of Elmer by constantly putting him forward in public, and assiduously paying him social attentions in private. Thus, while the bulk of a constituency may remain stanch to their principles, the men whom they have learned to regard as their representatives may gradually be drifting into quite an opposite course (*quis custodiat ipsos custodes?*). The epigram on an old 'whip' of that date is still germane:

'Says H—t—r sly, I'll tell you why
We beat you men with ease;
You spend your notes on borough votes,
We purchase the M.P.'s.'

Yet, like the Burgundian statesman in the hands of the wily French tyrant, the trout may be tickled so as to retain a full conviction of his own high-minded superiority to any sordid inducement.

I do not think that Elmer left his own party without some searchings of heart, to judge at least from his perpetual insistence, when he met an old friend, upon the fact that Lord Derby had followed in the wake of Peel, and abandoned Protection on his assumption of office in 1852, a retrogression which was emphatically resented by nearly fifty of the stalwarts who went into the lobby against Ministers on the Address of that session. My friend had never been a Disraelite, and now professed to be shocked with the levity with which that statesman took certain questions of Church politics which then agitated the religious world. 'A callous hypocrite, that Jew,' said he, 'quite capable of joining Gladstone in a scheme to rule England as well as Ireland through the Jesuits.'

It is curious that in a recent autobiography the author, who owed everything to Lord Beaconsfield, yet constantly opposed him, justifies his ingratitude by the want of religious principle which he detected in his patron, and certainly the politician had none of that theological quixotry which actuated many of his contemporaries, especially the Oxford School; but

Elmer, who would have been glad, while talking the strongest Orange sentiments, to see the protective duties kept in being by Irish votes, a prospect which the astute O'Connell constantly dangled before us, was hardly consistent enough to rebuke such inconsistency. But he was quite right when he abandoned the name of Tory (Conservative he never would be called), and dubbed himself a true Whig of the Revolution settlement. Perhaps, too, he was as correct in another self-comparison with which he startled me one day about this time, when declaiming with his usual intensity against that extraordinary bugbear which then enthralled everybody's attention, and is now so totally forgotten that it would be hard to find anybody who could tell you what is meant by the Papal Aggression Bill, of which he was a fervent advocate. 'Lord George Gordon may have died mad,' quoth he, 'but in 1780 he was as sane as you or I are!'

Elmer immediately after the election betook himself to some friends in the South of England to digest his mortification, and my next news of him was an invitation to his wedding. He had met at Brighton the daughter of an Indian general officer, with whom he had fallen in love, and his suit had been accepted. As the lady's father had to return to the East forthwith, the marriage was to take place at once. I found the bride-elect a lively, handsome young woman

of a type new to me—tall and active, clever and audacious; her wit sharpened by being 'constantly in poortith's sight,' and just the slightest taste of the barrack-room in her style. How my stolid friend had ever contrived to propose I could not divine. There was, indeed, a rumour that he had thrust a letter into her hand and muttered in his gruffest tone, 'Read this.' But the objection which sceptics raised to the legend was, that she could never have deciphered the contents of the billet. The damsel sincerely appreciated her somewhat eccentric lover, and was, poor soul! a thoroughly affectionate, if not always judicious, partner of his joys and his sorrows.

A memorably ludicrous incident distinguished the wedding-breakfast, given at one of the hotels in the town, where the Oxford contemporaries of the bridegroom strove to rival the girl friends of the bride in laughter and chatter. Elmer, replying to the toast of 'The Happy Pair,' thought it a fitting opportunity to introduce a flight of his old Union oratory. 'You have launched,' he began, 'the good ship Gerald and Lucy, you have broken a bottle upon her stern,'—when his eye caught that of an irrepressible jester, who was sitting just opposite, his hand to his ear, feigning to drink in every word. 'Where?' murmured the farceur. Elmer turned green, stammered 'I th-thank you,' and sat down. Fortunately, an Irish

Bishop, a cousin of the bride, who had officiated in the church, was seized with so terrible a fit of coughing, from the attempt, probably, at a silent laugh after the manner of the elder Weller, that in the confusion which ensued the speech was left out of mind, and the bride quietly slipped away to make her travelling toilette.

It may be surmised that his marriage did not advance Elmer's prospects much, politically or socially. The Mrs. Grundys of Chalkshire did not find a lady to their taste, who not only went out with the shooters, but took a gun herself; and Mrs. Elmer was by no means indisposed to accept their verdict, and instead of the three days' visit (the rest day, the dressed day, and the pressed day, as the novelist called them), so frequently a social penance, she much preferred filling her own house with her husband's more amusing if less respectable friends. The worst result of this preference was that Elmer grew accustomed to play the *Mecenas* to impecunious and sometimes unscrupulous projectors, for whose hobbies he was expected to find provender in the shape of ready money, or, worse still, to incur liabilities, the full extent of which he did not by any means comprehend.

Mr. Tregutter, for instance, of the *Well Undeified* newspaper, made that pioneer of society journalism

very much at Gerald Elmer's expense. It is a well-ascertained fact that subsidized newspapers never pay, even though the founder and the staff may flourish. One spirited idea of the great *censor morum*, which has been found to answer since by journalists whose names fill the mouths of the million, was to select some delinquent of so tainted a character that one blast of the newsman's horn would bring it to the ground, and then to ensure an action for libel by a subsidy to a speculative attorney to take up the plaintiff's case, with the result of a verdict for the *Well Undefined*, and a peal of prearranged applause of its conductor's public spirit; a good puff for the newspaper, especially out of the pocket of some generous friend.

If Tregutter were a horse-leech, ever crying, Give, give, to what must be likened Herr Carl Manteuffel, erst of Buda-Pesth, now of Chicago, once patriot, now projector, who would interlard tales of Kossuth and Garibaldi, both of whom he had pretty certainly spied upon and betrayed, with glowing eulogies of mines, railways, and building locations in the Far West? The flourishing city of Eden as it appeared on paper was a fair type of most of these Eldorados, and Mr. Goldberg, of Lubeck and New York, the lion to whom the patriot Herr played jackal. Elmer was warned against him in vain, and figured far too often in his prospectuses.

It was some time before my friend had another opportunity of again throwing down his gauntlet in the political lists, and when it arrived he was in the dilemma so well known to halters between two opinions; ultimately he resolved to go the whole hog:

‘Perforce, I don’t deny it,
But brought his pigs to a sad market by it’—

his expression of unqualified confidence in the former object of his invective, Mr. Gladstone, meeting with a decided rebuff from the electors, and he himself being far from pleased with his own supporters, as a passage from one of his letters will show:

‘It’s all very well to talk of the happiness of independence, but I find there is no such thing in politics; and I know now by sad experience the truth of what old MacDonnel used to tell us over his tumbler of Irish. All parties suffer from their tails, but our sufferings are worse than yours. The low-class Radical is less tolerant than old —— (giving the name of one of his Tory foes), and not half so much of a gentleman. The men are not the worst, either—one can have the last word with them; but the women! I am a profound believer in Juvenal now, and yet shall have to support female suffrage, I suppose. Well, you Tories turned me out, so I must make my bed elsewhere and lie in it. What a

humbug the whole thing is!" And he grew morose and suspicious, kindly as ever to any old friend or to any case of want, but jaundiced, testy, and given to personal attacks upon people to whom he conceived a distaste. Indeed, as one of his near friends informed me, he seemed to have come to the end of his tether in popularity and purse alike, his monetary affairs being in sad confusion owing to the large sums which he had invested in worthless speculations. It was even rumoured that his house had been invaded by bailiffs.

He wrote to me again in a terribly dejected strain, to announce that he and his wife, having let Elmer to a tenant, were looking out for a cottage in the neighbourhood of Oxford, where he might leave her during a visit to America, which he was compelled to make in order to look after some of his pecuniary ventures in the New World. This confirmation of the sinister rumours already afloat was speedily followed by the announcement of his having taken his passage across the Atlantic, and only a few weeks later, a line in the obituary of the *Times* recorded the death, 'suddenly, of Lucy, wife of Gerald Elmer, of Elmer Court, Chalkshire, aged 33.'

I could not but dread the effect of this sad news upon the affectionate if rugged nature of my poor friend, and I made prompt inquiry as to his where-

abouts, only to learn that he was supposed to be in the remoter regions of the Western States ; so that I had to content myself with a letter of condolence and inquiries consigned to the care of his agent, to which I had no reply.

Nearly three months afterwards I was suddenly called to Oxford on business during the long vacation, and after a hurried journey arrived, tired and hungry, at the Randolph Hotel. Committing my travelling bag to the care of the porter, I proceeded straight to the coffee-room in search of a meal. Seated by the fire was a solitary figure, which, starting up as I entered, stood revealed in the unkempt and haggard presentment of Gerald Elmer, who greeted me with a boisterous effusion, very unlike his usual accostal.

‘This is luck!’ he exclaimed ; ‘I want an old friend to unbosom myself to. Friends are scarce in this rascally world.’

He rambled on, constantly harping upon his own wrongs, the ingratitude and treachery with which he had been treated, and while he shed tears in speaking of his wife, spoke of her death as a happy deliverance from the vexations and disappointments of life.

‘But I’m dull, old fellow, as indeed I have plenty to make me, and my only chance is to get back to the old friends again. We didn’t play each other false in

those days. I'd have wrung your neck if you had'—with a threatening gesture: I started at his vehemence—'Oh, don't be afraid, you're not one of that sort, but I'll have the blood of that wretch who killed poor Lucy! I say, what's the number of your room?'

I hesitated—for even to a man of unflinching nerve, which I cannot boast of being, there was something frightful in this abrupt transition.

'What are you frightened at? I shan't hurt you, but you must see my collection of bowie-knives—rippers—with edges like razors.'

I was glad to be able to reply truthfully that I did not yet know where I was to sleep; but as soon as I could evade the poor fellow's volubility I repaired to the manager's office, to beg that I might be as far from his room as possible, and that the situation of mine might be kept a secret from Elmer. I discovered, moreover, that his state of mind had given the hotel people the utmost anxiety already. He had been induced, they told me, to consult some quack oculist upon the subject of his defective eye, and the barbarous treatment to which he had been subjected by this wretch had brought on a chronic pain in the head of a most excruciating nature. His groans and screams at night, they assured me, were terrible, and his behaviour was daily growing stranger. They

were much relieved when I gave them the address of his family physician (a relative, possessing great influence, as I knew, over him), and recommended them to telegraph for him at once in case of emergency.

I will not say that in the earlier part of the night I slept without trepidation, and that imagination did not play tricks with my sense of hearing. When, however, slumber came at last it was quite undisturbed, and I concluded the business which had brought me to Oxford, and left without again encountering the unhappy man.

As I expected, I speedily heard from the doctor that Elmer, having produced the case of knives in the coffee-room, to the great alarm of its denizens, had been put under restraint, and on the doctor's arrival had been persuaded to go in his company to look at a country seat, one of his wild ideas being that he was house-hunting. The country seat, I need hardly say, was a well-known asylum for lunatics, and when the courteous proprietor, who had shown him over the grounds, suggested that he might come and stay a few days, he was rather taken aback by Elmer's calm reply that, being a barrister, he knew that he could not be legally detained there, but under the circumstances was quite willing to submit to some restraint.

'No more politics for him, poor fellow!' said one

of the group at the University Club, when I announced the news.

'I don't know that,' interposed Roderick McAlpine, one of the best of our Parliamentary lawyers, who was standing by; 'I had a madman for a colleague once.'

'In the House of Commons?'

'Yes, and he used to go into seclusion of his own accord, as you say this man has done.'

'Tell us all about him,' was the general request.

'Well, some years ago I represented the borough of —, which returned two members. The other was a man of the name of Lennox, very well off, a very nice fellow, and an effective speaker. His manner was just a trifle distant and distraught, but we became great friends during our campaign, and when Parliament met, he said to me one day quietly, "McAlpine, if you have occasion to send to me at the Albany" (where he had a suite of rooms), "and they say I am out of town and have left no address, if your matter should be of special moment, follow me here"—handing me the card of a physician in St. John's Wood. "I am off my head sometimes," he added; "and as I generally know beforehand when it is coming on, I go to the doctor's until the attack has passed away."

'Sure enough, some few weeks later Lennox had

disappeared; and our Whip came to me to ask if I knew anything about him, as an important division was expected. I communicated at once with the address he had given me, and there he was; so I duly reported to the Whips that he was out of town, unwell, could not answer letters, and they had better not pair him. On the night of the division, as I went into the lobby, I felt someone touch my arm; I looked round and saw that it was my colleague.

"It is all right," he said; "I knew the division would be a near thing, so I made the doctor drive me down in his brougham, and he is waiting for me outside now. Good-night." And away he went, his vote having first been duly reckoned. In a week or ten days he was back in his place, looking much as usual, nor can I say whether he had to resort to his medical friend again, for he did not come forward at the next election, and, indeed, he died shortly after in Paris of typhoid fever. So your man may reappear again after all.'

And McAlpine was right, for our next news of Elmer ran to the effect that he had quite recovered both mental and bodily health, having had the eye which caused him so much pain removed, and that he had determined once more to try his luck as a Parliamentary candidate for Chalkshire.

This time he enjoyed the secrecy of the ballot, upon

which he professed in former days to found his hopes; nevertheless, his beating was even more thorough than upon any previous occasion, so that he began to be classed in Liberal circles with the unlucky division—horses who will never pass the post first—the abhorrence of election managers. With all his cherished hopes thus crumpled into dust, his home desolate, his circumstances so reduced as to be on the very verge of penury, the lonely man became almost a misanthrope, and, but for an occasional pamphlet, seemed dead even to his favourite schemes of politics and literature.

Pamphleteering is the last stage of literary egotism; the man who aspires to newspaper controversy has to submit his effusion to the keen eye of an acute editor, who puts into his mental scales the style as well as the sentiment of the production, and would reject the aphorisms of a Solomon if clad in the vapid verbiage of the poetaster; but beyond the grammatical and literal corrections of a printer's reader (of no small use to the author in many cases), he who prints a pamphlet subjects himself to no criticism save that of antagonists whom he is at liberty to ignore, and may cherish the illusion that he has slain as many giants as Don Quixote in his dreams. Elmer always had a leaning for this kind of authorship; indeed, many years before, I had been hastily summoned to his rooms in London, to find him sitting in the midst

of several hundred copies of a Protectionist manifesto, which the bookseller who had printed it for him refused to exhibit for sale, on the ground that he and many of his customers were Free-Traders. Now, however, 'G. E., late Liberal candidate for Chalkshire,' found publishers and even puffs for his effusions, though to the world at large they were merely 'Cobbett and water.'

Nevertheless, another Liberal candidate was selected for Chalkshire at the General Election of 1880, probably because Elmer was too independent in his views on Church matters for the clerical allies of Mr. Gladstone, who played such an inconsistent part in that melancholy exhibition, joining hands with the foes of all that they professed to hold sacred, for the purpose of avenging themselves upon Lord Beaconsfield for his Public Worship Act. There were, however, too many indications of the fortuitous nature of their triumph to permit any slackness in the work of revolution promised by the Radicals, and, moreover, the Government found themselves ere long imperatively driven to such measures, by the necessity of drawing a red herring across their policy in the East, so 1885 inaugurated the widest inroad into our electoral system ever yet known, the discordant instruments which figure in the Liberal band joining in unison to wrest the old constitutional axiom of 'taxation with repre-

sentation' into a new formula, 'That none should vote, but he who does not pay.'

Like the pithy passage in the old author, Plutarch, who says somewhere that the best musical instruments were made from the bones of an ass, by which he means that cant and falsehood are always in greatest perfection when proceeding from ignorance.

In this carnival of democracy Gerald Elmer once more emerged to the surface as the Radical candidate for the single-member division of Cumbermare, one of the two into which the former constituency of Chalkshire had been split. His friends were incredulous as to the truth of this announcement, for not only was his health again giving much cause for anxiety, his remaining eye having begun to suffer from sympathetic neuralgia, but his circumstances were so desperate that we hardly believed him able to find even the very moderate sum of money indispensably necessary as a preliminary to his candidature. We learned, however, that Mr. Goldberg had sent him a thousand pounds—by way, perhaps, of restitution.

His chances with the new electorate were by no means inconsiderable. His name alone still carried some weight. It is always an advantage in a canvass not to be obliged to explain to an ignorant voter who and what you are; most of the newly enfranchised were well acquainted with the old name, and had

a vague notion that the present bearer of it had been unfortunate or ill-used, and that he in some way was on 'their side.' There is still, thank God, a sentiment higher than party existing in a country where the bearer of an ancient name can say, 'My ancestors led yours to victory at Naseby and Blenheim, and I will lead you to peaceful triumphs now, if you will make me your representative.' Gerald Elmer had learned this lesson in the days when Disraeli's 'Sybil' was his favourite reading as well as mine, and he used it with great effect, being defeated by a majority hardly larger than that which had crushed his first Parliamentary aspirations.

He would most probably have succeeded outright, had his opponent been one of the original type; but the Conservative candidate, Aspen of Aspen Court, whom Jorrocks would have styled a 'masin poplar man,' had the dash and the resources which the old squirearchy wanted. It was a lucky day for young Sam Aspen when his father, the chemist in the county town, obtained permission from the ex-Viceroy of India, Lord Baroway, to make for sale a certain condiment which he had been in the habit of concocting for the private table at Baroway Court from a Hindoo recipe brought home by the great man. Not only in England, but wherever the proverbial roving Englishman sets his foot, 'Aspen's Chalkshire

Relish' has become a household word, and is to be found even in the bazaars of Lucknow and Cashmere, competing with its national prototypes.

Aspen the younger, as the evaporation of his liquid descended in a shower of gold, set to work pluckily to achieve greatness. He was called to the Bar, obtained an honorary M.A. degree from a small college at Cambridge, kept hounds, commanded volunteers, laid the first stone of Conservative clubs, lectured, presided, published; did everything by turns and nothing long enough to expose his deficiencies, or to excite the jealousy of professional rivals; but all the while kept a single eye to one object—a seat in Parliament. He bought an estate—of which the proper name, in every sense, was Windley-in-the-Wild—built a sumptuous mansion in the castellated style, which he denominated Aspen Court, planted half a million of trees round it, and, when the Conservatives found that none of their old Parliamentary hands would face the new constituency, came forward in the full tide of his popularity as the champion of their cause.

Measured against unequal odds like these, once more our knight-errant of Radicalism went down before the golden spear of the modern Conservative chevalier, but by a majority which did not reach three figures. The chagrin of the Liberals was excessive, and the more virulent of them presented a

petition claiming the seat for Elmer, and alleging bribery, treating, personation, intimidation, and 'omne quod exit in 'ation' against the Tory member, and the petition was duly heard, the eminent Mr. Cant, Q.C., being leading counsel for the promoters. One by one the figures of the Radical phantasmagoria disappeared under the relentless lens of Mr. Justice Radamanth, who presided over the inquiry, and the appropriately-named counsel was on the point of acknowledging the failure of his attack, when one of the minor features of the indictment came into notice, viz., the use of colours by the winning party.

Like many other places in England, the flourishing village of Cumbermare (flourishing since it became the seat of bicycle manufacture) had been inoculated with the football mania, and boasted a large club, importing its players from the North in the improved fashion of modern gladiatorship, but exercising, it was said, a very considerable influence in politics as well as football. Whether for this reason, or from a disinterested love of sport, Aspen had been the popular president of the 'Cubs,' as the Cumbermare footballers delighted to style themselves, and it occurred to his agent that it would be a good move to print upon a primrose-coloured card a portrait of the candidate, with the suggestive legend, 'Kick off, Cubs, and vote for Aspen.' This idea he carried out

at the rate of a thousand for twenty-five shillings, and they were distributed and worn in the hats of the Cumbermare youth, who forthwith felt bound in honour to shout, though they had no votes, for Aspen. Moreover, the agent included this item in the election expenses. When this fact had been duly admitted, the face of Mr. Counsellor Cant, which had been as long as his speeches, relaxed not a little, and he sat down with the simple remark, 'No more to say, m' lud.'

'Have you considered the effect of the fifty-fifth clause of the Corrupt Practices Act?' quoth the judge to Aspen's counsel.

A hurried and anxious consultation ensued, and then an appeal *ad misericordiam*—the offence so small, the agent a novice—the whole affair a mere technical error; such excuses were all that the quavering lawyers had to offer.

Had Mr. Justice Radamanth emulated the paradoxical irony with which Baron Maule once addressed a bigamist in the days before the Divorce Court was established, he might have said: 'There is a well-known maxim, "*De minimis non curat lex*," which is, profanely translated, The law does not stick at trifles, the true meaning of the aphorism being that you must be a notorious offender to put yourself in her clutches. Now, such trifles as inducing electors to vote for you by promises of substantial advantage to

be conferred at other people's expense in the shape of legislative enactment, by covenanting to promote private Bills which will bring money into the locality, or even by actual prospect of personal advantage, are not illegal ; nor, indeed, are some other persuasives known to agents, if not found out. But to give a man who may possibly have a vote, though probably he has not, a piece of paper of infinitesimal value, and to include this profligate expenditure in the election accounts, is a gross and serious offence against law, and subjects the perpetrator to the loss of his seat, as well as to incapacity to be returned during the present Parliament.'

But Mr. Justice Radamanth thought it more dignified to say, having cited the clause which had been violated, 'I have therefore to announce with regret that Mr. Aspen is not duly elected, and that Mr. Elmer, who claims the seat, must have it awarded to him.'

Ludicrous and almost humiliating as his triumph was, it meant to Elmer the attainment of an object upon which he had set his heart during his whole life, and I wrote my congratulations accordingly. But new misfortune dogged my friend's progress, and when I heard from him, or, rather, from his amanuensis, it was to tell me that, though pronounced duly elected, he doubted whether he would ever take his seat, his eye being in such a condition that the doctor

forbade him to attempt the journey. As the critical struggle upon the Irish proposals of Mr. Gladstone was just imminent, the conflicting rumours as to the health of the member for Cumbermare made many a daily line in the contents bills of the evening papers, and happy was the journal which anticipated its rivals in the announcement that Mr. Elmer was pronounced sufficiently convalescent to attend the House.

To those who knew the story of his life there was something extremely affecting in the spectacle of the once sturdy Oxford oarsman, with tottering gait and disfigured features, led helplessly up to the table, where his hand was guided to make an almost illegible signature. Yet with characteristic gameness Gerald Elmer spoke cheerfully, telling an old friend, with whom he dined, that he intended to take part in the debate as well as in the division. A speech, however, was quite beyond his powers ; he became much worse during the next week, and though he recorded his vote, he was immediately removed in a state bordering upon collapse to the lodging which he had engaged. While his flame of life flickered feebly in its socket, the remaining business of the Parliamentary session was brought to a conclusion, and an immediate dissolution was announced.

No longer a piece in action in the political chess-board, Elmer lay, forgotten by the world at large, in

the cheerless solitude of a London lodging. Still some kind hearts were faithful and compassionate. Especially was I glad to hear that the Vicar of his parish, whom Elmer had once thought proper to dub an enemy, had come up to London to give his services to the dying man.

When I called at the house where my poor friend lay, in one of those streets north of Cavendish Square where one might imagine, in the spirit of the Persian tale, a crowd of ghosts at every portal, commensurate in number to the reputation of the physician or surgeon within, the door was opened by Elmer's old servant, whom he had taken as a lad from a reformatory school, and been repaid by years of devoted gratitude.

'Will your master see me?' I inquired.

'Oh, surely, sir, he has been wandering in his talk, but he has mentioned you once or twice.' Indeed, sad as was the sight of the bandaged and motionless figure in the bed, there was a placid, softened expression in the face to which it had long been a stranger. He pressed my hand, and murmured a word or two of welcome. In a few minutes his voice grew stronger, and he began to talk. 'I am glad to have you here,' said he, 'I expected you to come, and it's as well you came to-day, for I am going soon.'

Supposing him to allude to his precarious condition, I said that I hoped he was not going yet.

'I am,' was his reply, 'as soon as my mother comes. I've heard from her to-day, and she doesn't think Chiswick' (our school name for the sick-house) 'suits me, so she means to carry me off home with her; I couldn't go into school again this half: and a few rides on my pony will soon set me up.'

Heaven is more pitiful to us than we are to ourselves, was my reflection; for here was this poor wreck of a man carried back, like David when he sighed for the wings of a dove that he might fly away and be at rest, to the pleasant pastures of the days of boyhood, where all is roseate. This peaceful illusion lasted through his illness. He spoke one day of the goodness of Fetherston (the Vicar) in seeing him so often, and expressed his regret that his father should ever have been hard upon him. In fact, it was the Vicar's father with whom Mr. Elmer senior had had a quarrel. 'The dad is hard sometimes,' he whispered, 'just man as he is. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." I hope I shan't forget that when I come into Elmer.'

By-and-by he spoke again:

'I think I shall sell the dear old place—there is no one to come after me, you know, for I shall never marry. I could build a convalescent home at Torquay, and go and live there myself—an old bachelor with a cat.'

He was silent for a space, but shortly I heard him whispering and laughing to himself. I went softly up and listened ; he was repeating :

“ In my blue cat I take a pride :
He bears the bell from all beside.
There's many a cat they call a blue
My Tom would blush to be likened to.”

Ha, ha, Paul ! how capitally Julia Bennett sang that in the Invisible Prince ! We must go and hear it again, and the duet with Priscilla Horton too.’

Thus he ran on with recollections of fifty years ago, but with never a word of complaint, censure, or curiosity. To politics he alluded but once ; when he drew me down to him, and said softly in my ear, ‘ You are not a republican, are you, Paul ?’

‘ Why, Gerry,’ I replied, ‘ you ought to know I’m not.’

‘ Ah, well, but men do change so nowadays. Don’t have anything to do with them. They’re a bad lot, a dangerous lot ; but I’m not afraid so long as we have the old Duke to keep an eye on them !’

Day by day his frame grew weaker, and his mind more clouded. At last, one morning, the doctor met me with the verdict that a very brief hour must bring the end. I went upstairs, and found that the Vicar had been with him, and that he was now in deep slumber, almost pulseless, so I sat down to await the event.

By-and-by he stirred ; the nurse gave him some stimulant. He recognised me near his bed, and took my hand once more.

'Paul,' he whispered, 'do you believe the world is round?'

'Yes, Gerry, of course I do ; we have often disputed about that.'

'Perhaps you may be right, after all. I mean to go a voyage, and see. I've engaged my berth.—Francis !'

'Yes, sir.'

'Pack——' A long silence. 'Pack——'

'He's gone, sir,' said Francis, two large tears rolling down his face.





A GEM OF THE SEA.

READER, do you know anything about madrigals? I know, on Shakesperian authority, that melodious birds sing them to the falls of shallow rivers; and memory recalls a charming chapter in Mortimer Collins's too-little-remembered novel, 'Frances,' where some dainty bits of humorous epigrammatic verse are introduced as specimens of the madrigals sung in his ideal municipality of Southpool; but I do not imagine that any of these were ever performed at our Oxford Madrigal Society, of which I was a

member half a century ago, and where I first met Mr. Terence Malone, whose history I have just sat down to write.

His was a figure to attract attention at once, tall, loose-limbed, with fine features, and a head of hair of that rufous colour which isn't brown, yet which you would hardly describe as red—certainly not by any disparaging adjective such as 'carroty.' Of this ornament he sported, in the fashion of a day when the roundhead crop was a thing of the future, a luxurious and wavy abundance; but picturesque as was his exterior, it was the ear and not the eye which conveyed the strongest impression of his personality to the tablet of memory, for his sweet and powerful counter-tenor mingled so well in the concerted pieces, and soared aloft in such volume and purity when a few bars of solo gave him the opportunity of displaying it unaccompanied, that one felt the spell of his melody reach to one's very heart-strings.

'Who is the man with that charming voice?' said I to Gray Outram, our director, conductor, and general fautor, a musician who had harmonized in leading strings.

It was reported and believed of him that when four years old he had electrified his parents by telling them that papa snored in A flat. He was

just as full of music when he came to Oxford, and to the last his ear was never dull nor his passion for harmony abated.

'Oh, that's an importation from the Isle of Saints,' quoth he; 'we have surnamed him "The Gem of the Sea." He sings that cantata so charmingly. No musician, though, no more than yourself'—Outram loved to flout at me, for he had shrewdly detected the fact that I had joined the society far more on the score of good-fellowship than from real love of music—'but he has a voice, and taste and feeling, and he will give abundance of pleasure to other people, and keep himself, I hope, out of mischief at the same time, for the rest of the Paddies up here are a rare harum-scarum set.'

'Yes, a nice rowdy set Malone will be in if he consorts with his fellow-countrymen,' I remarked. 'I don't think their *genius loci* has altered much since the days when Brasenose required quadruple caution money from an Irish fellow-commoner.'

'Like an ingenious pupil of mine,' added Outram by way of finale, 'who, when I hazarded a hope that a particularly ugly church in the neighbourhood would be burned down some day, whispered in his most insinuating brogue: "And d'ye really mean it? for I'd like well to please ye, and it would be such a lark to burn down a church!"'

Nevertheless, when I encountered Outram one afternoon soon afterwards, as I was crossing the High on my way to the inspection of afternoon practice on the river (the first duty in those days of every patriotic boating man), I found him bent upon carrying me off to accompany him to leave a card on Malone, whom he intended to invite to partake of his hospitality in some form or other, a symposium which in Oxford had an infinite variety corresponding with the resources, means, and tastes of the entertainer. Hard-working men, for example, eschewed breakfast-parties, which, on the other hand, were popular with a quiet set who did not read severely, and had credit at the college buttery. A dinner in hall was quite the thing in certain foundations, like New College and Magdalen, where the company was select and the cook unexceptionable. On the other hand, several colleges shared the reproach which the current saying attached to the 'House' dinner in 1847: 'What to eat, drink, and avoid? A breakfast at Balliol—Merton Archdeacon—The Commoners' table at Christ Church.'

What particular form our attentions to Malone took it would be impossible to condescend upon, as the Scotsmen say, at this distance of time, but I remember very well that the result was an invitation on his part to Outram and myself to dine with him at

St. Alban's Hall, a portion of Alma Mater of which he was in every sense a principal constituent, for he comprised in his own person a moiety of the resident undergraduates, the other half being one of the most notorious characters in the University, a man whose influential connections and distinguished name had recommended him to the Principal, and still kept him going, in spite of a moral obliquity and defiance of good manners which made him a pariah in the collegiate world.

Malone himself, I may mention here, was not exactly a freshman. He had originally come into residence as a gentleman-commoner at one of the larger colleges, but some breach of discipline had embroiled him with a tutor, and sundry 'wild and whirring words' had passed, which ended in the undergraduate, in default of an apology for his disrespectful language, being desired to absent himself from the precincts of the University for a year. He took his name off the college books forthwith, and repaired to Edinburgh for tuition, where he not only learned to despise the 'barbarous pronunciation of the Latin tongue' so dear in those days to the Oxford ear, yet so abhorrent to the critical taste of modern Athenians, but also graduated in the sporting school of Ramsay of Barnton, Lord Elcho, and the Nimrods of the Caledonian Hunt. If Oxford tradition were

true, he figured not unsuccessfully in the saddle in races for gentlemen riders, and identified himself so completely with handicaps and weight for age, etc., that when he happened one day to encounter a couple of old Oxford acquaintances in Princes Street, his greeting took form in these words, 'And how much do you fellows think I'd scale now?'

Nevertheless, it could not be said of Malone, as Dean Hole said of a sporting contemporary, that the only Muse he cared for was the Mews where he kept his horses. The death of his father, which took place during the period of his exile, made him the possessor of a dwindling though still considerable Irish property, and instead of crossing St. George's Channel and emulating the first flight of the Galway blazers or the rakes of Mallow, he harked back to University associations, and obtained rooms in the miniature foundation where Outram and I were trysted as his guests.

Alban Hall is a thing of the past, a *nominis umbra*, absorbed by its powerful neighbour Merton, but I trust that its quaint old buildings have been preserved in their pristine picturesqueness. This, however, can scarcely be, so far as regards the tiny refectory where we were entertained, an apartment with all the features of the larger halls dwarfed as if viewed through the wrong end of a telescope; the

dark timbered roof, the oaken settles, even the daïs and its high table, were there, and the screen with the intimations that Mr. Malone and Mr. Simkinson were to attend the Vice-Principal's Greek lecture, and that Mr. Wilderspin and Messrs. Jones and Pennyfarthing were to keep two extra chapels this term.

'You have some more undergraduates here, then?' I inquired.

'Certainly we have,' responded our host; 'Simkinson, you know, is married, and resides in Holywell, with spouse and bantlings, who have the terminal excitement of vociferating, "Ma, pa's plucked again!" Jones has been sent down, and Pennyfarthing never comes up. He has, they tell me, a studio in Fitzroy Square, and is a twinkling star in the Pre-Raphaelite firmament—so I and the Ogre divide the land.'

'The Ogre being Wilderspin, I suppose?'

'Hush, he's here,' whispered Outram, giving me what I once heard an old pensioner call an *item* with his foot under the table, just at the moment that the other *in statu pupillari* resident of the hall entered with a swagger, and, totally ignoring our presence, sat down at another table, where, tardily removing his cap, he demanded of the waiter ('Old Cockywax' was his form of address) what he had for dinner?

'Filth! Rot! Bosh!' was his comment on each

dish as it was recited to him, and, the list concluded, 'What d——d fool ordered this dinner?' was his summing up. 'Do me a beefsteak with onions.'

Forthwith he drew a chair to the fire, and proceeded to study a copy of *Bell's Life*, which he produced from his jacket pocket. I must own I could not help casting glances of observation at a figure so infrequent in the decorous circles of the University, although I had seen him before, in certain rooms in Tom Quad where a sparring match was going on under the auspices of a sporting Tuft, and Wilderspin, in full pugilistic undress, was acting as master of the ceremonies, preserving a taciturn and business-like demeanour in keeping with the status of a paid official, which, in fact, was his real position for the evening. In his own den, and relieved from the necessity of a strict toilet, his close-cropped neck revealed the fact that he was not as particular as little Lord Fauntleroy in Mrs. Burnett's charming fancy, about the 'corners' in his daily ablutions, while the coarse soiled collar of his shirt, surrounded by a gaudy fringed scarf (Joinville it was called then, after the pugnacious son of Louis Philippe), was stamped, as was the crumpled front of the same garment, with pink presentments of 'pets of the ballet.' The whole of the rest of his attire was equally flashy and

shabby, and his gown and cap simply two limp and faded rags. He was too deeply engaged with his steak and onions to look up when we left the hall, at the conclusion of our meal, for Malone's rooms, where a blazing fire, a pretty dessert, and a bottle of fine old hock from the cellars of the ancestral château in Ireland, were awaiting us.

'What a trial your daily dinner must be!' was Outram's first remark to our host.

'Yes, it is a little difficult to endure it,' replied Malone, 'but the Ogre was uncommonly out of sorts to-day. After we had our row royal, and I told him that I didn't mean to speak to him again, he settled down into a sort of stony unconsciousness, which rather failed to make the desired impression upon me, for the sense of relief overpowered the feeling of constraint; but although I have had guests before, I never knew him to exhibit such bearishness as he did to-night—I wonder what made him so terribly out of sorts,' he added, half to himself.

'Beg pardon, sir,' said the scout, who had just appeared with some hot chestnuts, 'Mr. Wilderspin's been in a row, sir.'

'Indeed—of what kind?' inquired the master.

'Well, sir, Mr. Wilderspin, sir, 'as won a bird—a poll parrot, sir, hin a cage, at a raffle in Tom Potter's public at the back of St. Owles.'

'You know the stinking place,' said Malone under his breath to me.

I shook my head.

'Well, sir, comin' the short-cut across the medder, Mr. Wilderspin he meets an old gent as was a horthocologist' ('ornithologist' I presume was meant), 'and he stops him and astes him what he'd take for the bird. Seems he thought he was one of the regular boatmen, sir, and Mr. Wilderspin, for all he's so free with King's cads, is a harbitrary gent, and he gives the hold fellow the rough side of his tongue, and then hup comes a policeman just as the hold gent 'ad struck Mr. Wilderspin with a humbereller, and Mr. Wilderspin 'ad broke it all to bits. So they're both to go to the court to-morrow, and the hold gent 'e's a stayin' with the Vice-Chancellor!'

'Here's a sensation!' cried Outram; 'no wonder your amiable chum had such a sore head to-night. Let's forget him and talk of something pleasanter.'

In the sequel, I may say, prudent counsel prevailed with the Vice-Chancellor's guest, and the matter was adjusted without a public exposure of the facts. I must own at the same time that the impression produced on my mind, by what I had seen and heard, was that my Hibernian friend was living in dangerous proximity to an explosive, and I longed to hear either that some other rooms were tenanted, or that Wilder-

spin would take himself off. The knot, however, was destined to be cut in a more speedy and sensational manner than I had expected.

It was about the middle of the Lent term that I received a note from an old friend, a family connection of mine, in fact, to the effect that he was coming up to Oxford for a few days, and would quarter himself upon me. I had just passed my schools, and was glad enough to have his company, for he was a study of character, and generally acceptable in Oxford society. His name was Cambridge, but he was almost universally addressed as Garry, from the fact that at Eton his elder brother, who had been christened Owen, had borne that sobriquet, and, as was not unusual, bequeathed it to his 'minor.' Young Garry was always at the bottom of his form, but he maintained such a stolidity of demeanour and such imperturbable good humour that he was voted an excellent companion, and the incarnation of common-sense. From Eton he had gone into a solicitor's office, and led a tranquil existence of moderate industry, his ruling passion appearing to be an intense interest in horse-races, though he was nothing of an equestrian, confined his bets to the most modest dimensions, and had no veterinary knowledge, real or imaginary. In fact, his hobby was rather a fancy for owners than for horses, but such as it was, it sufficed to keep him

occupied in his dilatory fashion all the year through. He often came to Oxford, where he was well liked, and he returned the compliment, asseverating that it was the best place he knew to spend Sunday in (and here he was wont to lower his voice to a tone of confidential solemnity), because, with judicious management, you could have five square meals there on that day. .

I have no doubt that Garry had established his footing in undergraduate favour, for first impressions go a long way with young men, by an incident which distinguished his very earliest appearance in Oxford. Half a dozen of us were sitting in a friend's lodgings in the High Street one evening, when Garry, with his invariable pipe alight, came in, looking, it struck me, just one shade less composed than usual.

'Anything the matter?' I inquired.

'A most extraordinary thing has just occurred,' was his reply; 'I met a man in the street who asked me what my name was.'

'And what did you say, Garry?' chorussed two or three youngsters immediately.

'I said, "I will tell you that to-morrow, sir"; and he walked away without another word.'

The shouts of laughter which followed the tale of this unconscious repartee to the proctor may be imagined, and 'I'll tell you to-morrow' became a household word in Oxford for many a day.

Remembering Cambridge's sporting proclivities, I was by no means astonished, upon his arrival, to find that he had come with the intention of being present at some hunt races within a day's ride of Oxford, which were to be held that week, and he plied me with questions, which to his disgust I proved totally incapable of answering, till it luckily occurred to me to take refuge in the promise to introduce him to a man who would be able, probably, to satisfy his curiosity, inasmuch as I had heard him say that he was going to ride a horse there. When Malone came in, the freemasonry of jockeyship soon launched the pair into a technical conversation almost unintelligible, and by no means interesting, to me, until Cambridge, turning to me, observed :

'I suppose you know young Prestolee, Lord Farnworth's son?'

I did know the Last of the Barons,* as he was

* The title of the Last of the Barons was derived from an Eton memory. Lord Farnworth, whose ideal academy was holy Henry's foundation in the days of Keate, had sent his son to Eton when but eight years old, and the lad had been duly inducted, with all the ceremonies of 'Church sock' (for the particulars of which I refer you to Mr. Coleridge's charming volume) into one of the stalls in chapel, where sons of peers in those days sat side by side with conducts and fellows. This questionable privilege was shortly after abolished in the case of new arrivals, but the holders of stalls continued *in excelsis*: Prestolee, as the survivor for several years, being dubbed, as he sat in solitary state, by the title of Bulwer's famous novel.

generally called, from an epoch in his life connected with a curious Eton tradition, and had enjoyed the racy story of the master of his college telling him that though, in deference to his father's request, he would be allowed to hunt, it seemed a highly unreasonable stipulation, when there was the whole long vacation to hunt in—I did not know at that time the master was a Devonian, and had of course often seen stag-hunting in the 'Long.'

Malone fathomed the spirit of Cambridge's inquiry more successfully than I should have done.

'A nice lad,' was his comment—'a pretty light weight, and well mounted; he has two of the best nags in Oxford, and will run one on Wednesday.'

'Ah,' returned Cambridge, 'that's just what I was afraid of—it's Rhadamanthus, no doubt.' A nod from Malone. 'Lord Farnworth will be frightfully annoyed. The horse was taken out of training because he had not a turn of speed enough for the big races, but he has plenty of stamina, and if he is made as a hunter might win at Liverpool some day. Then all this leather-plating business is very distasteful to the Earl, who hates the low turfite, and never countenances little-goes. I must see the boy to-morrow and get the horse withdrawn.'

'That will be rather hard to manage, I'm afraid,' responded Malone. 'Prestolee has not entered the

horse himself: he has lent him to Jack Selvage, and some friend of his is coming to ride him; they offered me the mount, but I was engaged to ride for Sharpe of Oriel.'

'Selvage, hey?' quoth Cambridge; 'that's Lord Maxim's brother, I suppose? A bad egg, too. And they think that Rhadamanthus will win?'

'Bar accidents, I should say, for certain,' was Malone's reply. 'I don't think there's even a dark horse in that race—all well-known old Oxford crocks like mine, merely entered for the fun of the thing, and the winner to be sold for a hundred.'

'Ah, that's where the robbery comes in,' said Cambridge, and launched out forthwith into a flood of anecdote about selling races and nobbles, and a hundred traits of turf chicanery, which I must own reduced me to amazed if not respectful silence. He declined Malone's offer of a seat in a dogcart to the course, on the plea that he must have a conveyance at his own command, as his movements might be uncertain.

'Don't put any money on Rhadamanthus,' was his last injunction to Malone. 'I don't think he'll start.'

All the next day Cambridge was most mysterious and busy. He went to Prestolee's rooms to luncheon, and dined with another sporting man. The following

morning he insisted upon my driving him to the course, urging that he wanted a friend who cared nothing about the sport, which he well knew I did not : for if you wish to see the seamy side of the racing world, these little gatherings in remote places have always appeared to me the very scenes to disenchant you. At Epsom or Doncaster there is something imposing in the magnitude of the crowd, the beauty of the horses, the babel of sound ; but a few dozen shabby sportsmen shivering in waterproofs in one corner of a marshy meadow, where the stiff clay yields with a blob to every footstep, and the dank mist dissolves into moisture on the greasy planks and dingy tarpaulin of the grand stand—the worst inn's worst wine, vitriolic gin and creosote brandy, sandwiches which would defy the masticatory powers of a hyena, and pies filled with organic remains of domesticated animals—are not associations which are likely to suggest anything but ennui and disgust ; so that, admitting the sport to be of the best, the visitors are scarcely disposed to enjoy it. But when the high-mettled racer, first favourite for the stakes, is a melancholy old crock with three legs bandaged, and a pair of blinkers, in spite of the raucous enthusiasm of the foul-mouthed, scowling hangers-on of the tavern-yard, who form the staple of the scanty assemblage yeapt the public, you realize that you are privileged

to see the coarse gingerbread without gold-leaf, and feel astonished that so poor a show should exercise a scintilla of fascination even upon the rawest of neophytes.

'There are blacker features even than these in the background to-day,' added a friend; 'I hardly know which is the more terrible—the determined rascal whose boast is that he neither fears God nor regards man, or his gin-sodden female cogener, on the lookout for some greenhorn whom she may contrive to entice to her fulsome caresses. I'm a sporting man myself, I love hunting, and I back my fancy for the Derby or Leger, but the only excuse which I can suggest for such an exhibition as this is that, like the Spartans with their drunken Helot, you fancy that the boys will be disgusted at the sight—and that, let me tell you, is not a very safe inference. However, here we are, and we must make the best of it.'

The card of events contained four items, of which the race Cambridge had come to see was third. What at a theatre would have been called the curtain-raiser was a match between two University men of no very great sporting fame. One of them was a wealthy gentleman-commoner of mercantile extraction, who had good, or at any rate costly, horses, but little skill in riding them; the other, a pleasant, clever, plucky

Wykehamist, who at Oxford, as in after-life, indeed, never attained that foremost place which his brilliant readiness constrained his friends to believe was his by right, if only he had not squandered his powers too easily in a variety of fields,

‘ And in the course of one revolving moon
Been poet, jockey, scholar, and buffoon.’

Consequently a large contingent of the Oxford company had come over eager to see Joe Beaufort in his new rôle.

The course was a stiff one, for after two or three fields of adhesive plough-land there came a wide natural water-jump over one of those brooks which, like the Whissendine, dull but dangerous, ran smoothly bank-high, and should you fail to clear a margin whose rotten edge forbade too close a shave,

‘ The deep eddies welmed both man and horse,
Swept like benighted peasant down the tide.’

A few fields further on a large ox-fence gave the horse and rider who were able to negotiate it successfully a considerable advantage over those who had to make the circuit wide from the turning flag, and the brook had to be crossed again on the way home.

The ‘Alifax’ Addock, as the gentleman-commoner

was styled, from his informing the men who dined at the same table that 'addock' was his favourite fish, and that he came from the town where dwelt the 'captain bold' who was the cause of the death of unfortunate Miss Bailey, was bestriding a handsome sixteen-hands bay horse, showing a good deal of the thoroughbred, and jumped off with the lead at once; he was soon rolling and walloping a couple of hundred yards in advance of Beaufort, who took his horse, a well-known old stager with the drag, who would jump anything standing or in his stride, at little more than a walking pace across the ridge and furrow, calculating upon coming to terms with his leader at the brook.

As the 'Addock' approached this obstacle, his speed visibly slackened, and that nervousness which notoriously exudes from the ends of the fingers no doubt communicated itself to the steed, who swerved and refused, nearly unshipping his rider. A second attempt, however, was more fortunate, and the brook was fairly cleared, but in so clumsy a fashion that the horse stumbled in landing, and unseated his jockey, just as Beaufort cleverly flew over at the first essay, and proceeded to take the inside place for the turn, before his rival could mount again. The inside berth, however, had no great signification to the 'Addock, who never intended to try the heroic attempt

of the ox-fence, and therefore made a much wider sweep to come at an easy place further down the field.

Beaufort, whose old horse was now warm to his work and going strong, handled him beautifully, and turned homewards quite a hundred yards before the rival jockey, now much more distressed than his horse. Matters were not mended for the 'Addock by another fall at a hurdle, and though he caught Beaufort up at the field before the water-jump, both horse and rider were undeniably pumped out. Instead of going straight at the brook, the horse stopped dead, and jerked his rider over his head like a catapult, plump into the middle of the stream, his vociferations and splutterings resounding far and wide, until he was hauled out by some on-lookers on the opposite bank. Beaufort, too, came to grief, jumping short, and as the bank gave way under the horse's legs, where he tried to scramble out, both man and quadruped were weltering in the stream, Beaufort getting back to the taking-off side, and the horse quietly swimming to a ford about a hundred and fifty yards lower down. Why Beaufort should then have caught the 'Addock's horse, have mounted him, and cantered in to the winning-post after safely achieving the brook, I never could explain, except that it was precisely the sort of feat which his light-hearted eccentricity would revel

in; but though by so doing he robbed himself of victory, he was received with uproarious applause and enormous laughter by his 'Varsity friends, Malone especially, who vowed that he would be proud to have him for a countryman. Very different was the verdict of Cambridge, who gravely shook his head in serious disapprobation. 'Very bad taste indeed, I think,' growled he, 'turning the whole business into a farce; I shan't stay any longer.' In fact, Cambridge had achieved his mission.

'I have talked seriously to Prestolee,' he said, 'and shown him what a scrape he will get into if Rhadamanthus starts. He has scratched the horse, and sent a messenger to meet the groom and take him back to Oxford; and now I shall drive with him to the station, and carry him off to make his peace with Lord Farnworth; so I hope you will forgive me for cutting you, and drive the cart back.'

I wondered whether Garry Cambridge's remonstrance had started with the same prelude with which he was credited to have prefaced some advice to a certain feminine magnate of the turf: 'Now, Duchess, don't you be a fool!' However, 'All's well that ends well,' said I; 'when I have seen Malone perform, I will hie me back gently to Oxford.'

Malone, having ridden over and changed at the inn, had appeared upon the course attired for his

race, but when he heard Cambridge announce his desertion, offered me his company home.

'I don't care for race ordinaries,' he remarked, 'and no doubt I shall find someone ready to ride my pony back.' By the time the horses were being walked to the post for the next race, he rushed up in wild excitement: 'Rhadamanthus is here, after all,' cried he, 'and Burlison is to ride him.'

'That's queer,' said Cherry of Magdalen, who had a horse in the race, 'after what Cambridge told us half an hour ago. I vote that you and I go to Selvage, and let him know Prestolee's wish not to start the horse.'

Off went the pair, and I followed more leisurely, puzzled what this new complication might portend.

The race in progress was just finishing, and the bulk of the crowd were gathered round the winning-post, but between the weighing tent and the stewards' enclosure I caught sight of a small knot of people, the nucleus of which was Selvage in animated discussion with most of the persons directly interested in the next race, as owners or riders, and thither I directed my steps, with no very great amount of alacrity, perhaps, for of all the men I knew in the University, Selvage was the one whom I held in the greatest abomination. I hated him, I think, mainly on account of the callous coxcombry of his manner, but years

afterwards, when he had achieved his Luciferian fall, and from private secretary to a foreign Ambassador had become a private soldier in the Zouaves, and figured under the head 'Missing' on the field of Solferino, some of our quondam mutual acquaintances would come forward to congratulate me on my acumen, and I myself would recall sayings and doings which must have had a sinister motive.

'It is no business of yours, sir, at any rate,' said a voice with rather a hard and angry ring in its tone—the voice of Burlison, 'Burly Burlison,' the best rider, runner, oarsman, and boxer of his day, one who never overstepped by so much as a hair's breadth the strict etiquette of the rules of sport, and within those rules never thought of foregoing the advantage he derived from his cool head and keen intellect. Malone stood flushed and breathless, confronting Burlison's steady and Selvage's chilling antagonism, trying to explain that Prestolee had sent the horse home, and withdrawn him from the race.

'And I have brought the horse back again, and intend him to run. Lord Prestolee has not communicated with me, and he cannot expect me to suffer for his caprice, when I hold his written agreement to lend me the horse for this race.'

It would be tedious to attempt to recall the wrangle which ensued, the insulting hints of Selvage, which

drove Malone nearly frantic, and the imperturbable determination of Burlison. Ultimately Malone and one of the other competitors scratched their horses, and refused to start. Two horses, however, were saddled and went to the post with Rhadamanthus, the last-named, perfectly jockeyed by Burlison, never giving his two opponents a moment's chance—indeed, one of them fell and was not persevered with, so the second place went to a weedy thorough-bred mare, described as the property of Mr. Jones, and ridden by a person who looked still less like a member of the University than Wilderspin, shrewdly conjectured to be a rough-rider from the neighbouring barracks.

Just as the weighing-out was concluded, a stout, flashy, overdressed person rolled up to the official who was acting as clerk of the course, and in the name of the owner of the second horse claimed the winner for the sum of £100.

'What shall I do, sir?' said the embarrassed personage (an Oxford publican) to Salvage.

'I don't know indeed—'tis awkward, certainly;' and Salvage's furtive glance stole round as if to make sure that no opposition would be offered.

'You can't surely give up Prestolee's horse,' said Malone.

'Come,' said Burlison, who had just returned after weighing and putting on his greatcoat. 'You must

be aware, sir, that the horse is not Mr. Selvage's, it is lent by a friend; cannot this be settled amicably ?

'I shall have to take my master's 'orse back to Oxford,' quoth Prestolee's groom.

'No such thing, young man : take him away at your peril. I'm not to be trifled with,' interjected the irate claimant. 'Sam, tell some of the helpers to come round here.'

Half a dozen villainous-looking scoundrels began to range themselves so as to bar our passage.

Selvage turned deadly pale, Malone was crimson with suppressed fury.

'I don't believe your entry is good,' vociferated he : 'who does the mare Kitty Clover belong to, and who is her rider ?'

'Ay,' added Burlison, 'that's the proper tack. You must prove your right, sir.'

'Of course—of course,' said the fat man, who momentarily waxed more vulgar and consequential. 'If that Hirish gent wasn't so 'asty. I'm Captain Petherick, Hile of Man Militia, member o' Tattersall's. The little mare is entered by my friend Mr. Wilderspin, who as 'ad the loan of 'er this term, and my rider was Mr. de Beaver, Magdalen 'All, Cambridge. Everythink's O.K.'

'Did you ever hear such a rigmarole !' burst forth

Malone. 'I can't stand by and see Prestolee's horse stolen by a set of thieves.'

'Thieves!' snorted the Captain; 'I'll 'ave your blood! Take the horse away!'

'You shall do no such thing.'

And coarser defiances began to be exchanged, while the Oxford contingent, some score in number, drew together, and began to handle whips and sticks in view of a stormy sequel. Burlison, though evidently puzzled, kept his composure.

'One moment, Burlison,' whispered Selvage, taking him by the arm. Burlison shook him off.

'Do you know this person, Selvage?'

'Yes, yes; I've no doubt he's to be squared. Don't let us have a row.'

'Where are the stewards?' said Burlison; 'isn't one of them here?'

There was one, it seemed, a boozy squireen in the neighbourhood; but the little clerk of the course thought he would not be of much use, and the only other of the half-dozen advertised who had shown up had gone home again.

'You'd better hear reason, Mr. Selvage,' said Petherick.

'Lord Farnworth's horse shan't be nobbled in this fashion,' retorted the groom.

'It will be all right, my man,' was Selvage's reply;

and he moved towards the shed where Rhadamanthus stood, clothed and bandaged, ready for a start homewards.

The ruffianly stablemen began to close round, and were joined by several loafers from the crowd. Malone's party was reinforced by some of the farmers.

'Do try and keep that Irish beggar quiet,' said Burlison to me; 'I've sent over to Sir Henry—and, by Jove, here he is!'

Up rode the best sportsman and most popular master of hounds in the Midland counties, not merely because

'He honoured that man, whatever his rank,
Whose heart heaves a sigh when his gorse is drawn blank,'

but because his high sense of integrity and exhaustive knowledge of human nature constituted him a judge in all sporting disputes, from whose decision there was no appeal.

Giving Selvage a distant nod, accompanied by a keen, penetrating glance of scrutiny under which that worthy visibly blanched, he beckoned Burlison to him, and held a brief whispered conference, at the close of which he uplifted his voice for the first time, and addressed Captain Petherick:

'I am informed, sir, that you are the owner of the horse which came in second, and that in accordance with the conditions of the race you claim the winner.'

‘ Exactly so, Sir ‘Enery.’

‘ And your own entry is correct and free from objection?’

‘ No doubt, no doubt ; Mr. Selvage knows that all is correct on my part.’

‘ Nevertheless, I object,’ said Burlison ; ‘ Captain Petherick is neither a member of the University nor of the hunt ; I am entitled to have proof of his right to claim the winner, and I ask you, Sir Henry, to name a day for the inquiry.’

‘ I will do so with pleasure, sir,’ replied the Baronet, ‘ and meanwhile Lord Prestolee’s horse had better go back to Oxford. Of course, Captain Petherick, Lord Farnworth, to whom the horse actually belongs, will produce him if awarded to you.’

‘ If that is your decision,’ began Petherick, ‘ I think——’

‘ Better perhaps not to express your thoughts,’ Sir Henry rejoined, interrupting him ; ‘ I have had plenty of experience in these affairs.’

Prestolee’s groom, much relieved, at once started with his horse, escorted by several of the Oxford contingent, while the rest of the company prepared for another race.

In the inn-yard, where, having found my stableman and dogcart, I was preparing to start for Oxford, Malone came up to me with rather a long face, and

reminded me of my invitation to ride home with me, someone having, as he had just discovered, appropriated his pony without, as far as he had been able to ascertain, leaving any kind of quadruped in its stead. During our drive he rattled on in the wildest manner, about the events of the day, from the excitement of which he had in no way recovered, and he maintained stoutly that such rascality would have been impossible in his own dear Emerald Isle.

““Rich and rare were the gems she wore,”’ sang he from Moore’s melodies, ‘yet the sweet innocent could traverse the Green Island from east to west, from Donegal to Bantry, and no Celt would ever think of laying a finger upon her.’

““Yet the Lord Mayor stole the collar of gold,
And swopped it away to a trader,”

laughed I, quoting a wicked parody current just then among Oxford men.

‘You Saxons haven’t the least taste of poetry in you. You’d parody the Psalms of David, only Tate and Brady have done it for you already.’

‘Well, however, we know how to settle our differences without a row’—‘A mean-spirited quality,’ interjected the Hibernian—‘and Sir Henry will sit upon that pretty little conspiracy beyond a doubt.’

‘Maybe; and I hope I’ll be there to see it,’ said Malone. ‘All the same, good fellow as he is, I’d have

been glad if the master had not come up quite so soon, and let me get a chance of breaking that fellow Selvage's head.'

'And getting your own broken, too, by Wilderspin, or perhaps Burlison, for he'd have been bound to support Selvage had there been a free fight.'

'Now, that's what an Irishman can't understand. Why should Burlison, straight fellow enough, just because he had promised to ride for Selvage, be bound to back him up in that scandalous plot to do young Prestolee out of his horse, until he got an opportunity of taking a formal objection? I don't call that upright.'

"Upright and downright is his constant rule,
Doubtless an upright man and downright fool,"

quoted I from one of Frank Talfourd's travesties.

'Ye may laugh, but it's true. We call a rogue a rogue in ould Ireland.'

'Then, you have rogues there after all!' quoth I.

'Yes, to be sure—Sassenach rogues, but never a Celt. I'll keep my own countrymen's company in future, and sup with O'Callaghan this very night.'

But this I was determined not to permit, so I reminded Malone that in common courtesy he must, after accepting a lift home from me, come and share my dinner; and taking good care never to lose sight of him, I succeeded in carrying him off afterwards to Outram's rooms, where the charms of music

'smoothed the savage beast,' as our janitor at the Madrigals used to say, and the pent-up excitement only bubbled forth for a moment when, Outram having ordered up some Bishop, Malone, filling his glass, insisted upon proposing my health, introducing two quotations from the Irish melodies and one from Byron, and shedding tears. I thought it best, after this, to walk back with him and see him safely into his rooms, before seeking my own couch, with the pleasing reflection that I had steered my friend through some dangerous eddies.

I had just finished breakfast the next morning, when a messenger informed me that the senior proctor desired to see me immediately. That I did not feel too comfortable, considering my experiences of the day before, may be easily understood, but when, on my approach to the college where the dignitary resided, I saw Outram just in front of me, I began to be puzzled.

'What can the proctor want with me?' was Outram's first word—'in such a mighty hurry, too.'

'I cannot conceive,' said I; 'I was afraid he might want me about those blackguard races; but you had nothing to do with that. We shall know soon enough, to be sure.'

Ushered into the august presence, we found the marshal in attendance, and were cordially greeted by

the proctor, who evidently wished to set us at our ease, and when we were seated inquired if we had any objection to say where we had been between the hours of eight and eleven overnight.

‘In my rooms, sir,’ said Outram at once; ‘some friends came in for a little music.’

‘Will you oblige me with their names?’

‘Certainly: we two, Stanley, Gillett, Malone’ (a nod from the proctor to the marshal, who looked blank), ‘and Chesterfield.’

‘And may I ask at what hour they left?’

‘Certainly,’ said Outram again; ‘I think it struck eleven,’ turning to me, ‘when you and Malone bid me good-night, and the other men had left less than five minutes before.’

‘True,’ added I; ‘I walked with Malone to the gate of St. Alban’s Hall, and saw him go through it.’

‘Thank you, gentlemen,’ said the proctor. ‘Marshal, just ask Mr. Malone to step in;’ and from an adjoining room appeared our friend with a look of injury on his clouded brow, which cleared off as the proctor addressed him:

‘Mr. Malone, I beg you will accept my apologies for my implied mistrust of your word. These gentlemen have absolutely confirmed your statement to me in every particular; but I am sure you will agree with me that the matter must not end here, and that

the delinquent who masqueraded in your coat must be brought to justice. The facts,' he continued, addressing us all, 'are these: We had some very undesirable visitors in Oxford yesterday, attracted by a race-meeting at Enville, attended, I am sorry to say, by members of the University.'

Perhaps one or two of his auditors winced at this exordium rather visibly, for he smiled as he went on to say:

'We are not going to inquire who these were, but we intend to warn the junior members of the University that we shall act more rigorously in future. Last night we learned that some of these blacklegs and their dupes were gambling at a certain low public-house, and a raid was made upon the premises, but no member of the University was discovered. Some individuals, however, only just managed to escape, and one of them in his flight had dropped a coat which is identified as Mr. Malone's by his name written in it. It will therefore be necessary to discover who wore Mr. Malone's coat.'

'And that,' said Malone, 'is just what I am determined to do.'

'Very good,' replied the proctor, 'and I will give you every assistance. Here is the coat. Good-morning.'

Once in the street again, Malone's wrath began to bubble over.

'Tis that miscreant Wilderspin!' he ejaculated. 'He stole my hack, and rode back with his rascally friends to Oxford, sent the horse back to the stables, and kept the coat which he found strapped to the saddle. I'll break the ruffian's head!'

'Better leave that to be done by one of his own blackguard associates,' said Outram; 'nevertheless, you must force him to confess he had your coat. We will go with you, and see you through it.'

'Is Mr. Wilderspin in?' asked Malone at the porter's wicket.

'Mr. Wilderspin, sir? No, sir, he's gone down, I suppose; at least, he never came in last night, and a man has brought a note this morning to pack his things and send them to the Brown Bear, Piccadilly, by coach. Stackhouse's man from the stables has been to look for him, and one of King's men about his boat. I expect he's made a bolt of it, and a good riddance, too.'

So we thought, and the fact of his disappearance practically clinched the question of his guilt about the coat, for a little more investigation acquainted us with the fact that he had been seen on Malone's pony coming back to Oxford, and subsequently in the company of Captain Petherick, as he called himself, alias, as it turned out, one Goodison, notorious for having attempted to win the Derby with a four-year-

old horse. I need hardly add, with regard to the race at Enville, that the stewards subsequently pronounced the nomination of the second horse void, and that Lord Farnworth retained Rhadamanthus, with whom, I may remark *par parenthèse*, he won the Liverpool Steeplechase two years afterwards, Burlison riding.

Malone continued in residence at his hall, and I am happy to say that he was fortunate enough, when next term some half-dozen undergraduates made their appearance there, to find a more congenial society than in the days of the Ogre. Yet he was not exactly a popular man among the undergraduate community, who have such a knack of discovering your weak point, and are so prompt to resent your insistence upon it. The crotchety man is the Anathema, and his best friends could not acquit Malone of that crime.

Among his favourite subjects of complaint was the edict at that time promulgated, as our friend the proctor had hinted it would be, against all kinds of horse-racing; of this he spoke with the loftiest scorn:

‘A stupid ukase! Compact and comfortable, as the man recorded in “Pickwick” said, when he cut his little boy’s head off to cure him of squinting. Why should Burlison and I be made the scapegoats of Goodison’s and Selvage’s misdeeds? What special sin can there be in a coloured silk jacket, or a friendly

match for a small wager with a good sportsman like Sir Henry for judge? It is another of those invasions of the privileges of Masters of Arts, from whom they derive their power, by those inquisitors-general the proctors; when I put on my gown, I shall beard them to a certainty.'

'It is a far cry to Loch Awe,' said a canny Scot, when Malone declaimed in this fashion: 'First pass your schools.'

He did, however, pass them, not only on the earliest permitted date and with apparent ease, but even with some degree of credit, for, to the astonishment and amusement of his friends, his name appeared in the mathematical honour list. The secret of this was that his memory, a very good one, stood him in such stead that he had acquired by rote so accurate a knowledge of the very limited portion of Euclid's elements required for the ordinary degree, as to have performed his task without a single mistake, a result which in those days was invariably rewarded by an honorary fourth class.

I suppose it was by way of indulgence after such an intellectual victory that I next heard from my Hibernian friend from Rhodes' Hotel, Westminster Bridge, a hostelry which before the days of the Embankment stood on the site of the St. Stephen's Club, and was much affected by London-loving under-

graduates of that era. He was taking a part, he wrote me word, in some amateur theatricals at Serjeant Talfourd's house in Russell Square, and was full of delight at the new world into which he was launched. I knew it thoroughly, with all its fascinations and its foibles, and I was not surprised at the glamour which such a glimpse of the *haute Bohème* would exercise upon his susceptible temperament. What young amateur's heart would not thrill at the kindly word which Charles Dickens had ever ready to encourage the smallest performer, or at the more curt, but to many perceptions heartier, approbation of Thackeray?

But in Malone's case I guessed also how much a favouring glance from one of those great artistes of the stage or concert-room, who would be found on off-nights (there were off-nights then even for stars) at the house of the future Judge, would accelerate the beat of his pulse, and how thoroughly he would enjoy the Bohemian suppers and impromptu dances which the author of the 'Ballet Girl' would give at his dentist's den in Percy Street, or organize at Weippert's Rooms. It was an undeniable truth that the fair damsels who would be the attraction at these reunions came there in all good faith and honour, that Mr. Ledbury and Jack Johnson merely anticipated the Trilby cult; but fire and tow are

dangerous neighbours, and I dreaded the possibilities of the future for our inflammable Hibernian.

Yet if London was Scylla to Malone, Oxford was Charybdis. He was no gambler, but idle social men are often tempted to 'take a card' from mere ennui. Suppose, too, that he really did embroil himself with the authorities by carrying into action any of his expressed intentions of defiance of discipline, the result was pretty certain to be disastrous. So on the whole I did not augur very hopefully of Malone's prospects. Given an idle man with an impulsive temper and active mind, place before him half a dozen roads leading by easy gradients to ruin, and the traditionary beggar on horseback will not achieve his journey faster. I did one day give him a hint that he might at any rate exercise some control over his expenditure, but he laughed me off with the old distich :

'I spend what I have, and I save what I owe,
And what's that to anyone, whether or no?'

Outram, also, who never lost his interest in a man with such a voice, wrote to me soon after I had gone down very despondently about Malone :

'I wish you were up,' his letter ran; 'the Gem is doing no good. He says that he is fighting the question of being entitled to count his terms from his original matriculation, but he seems to me to do

nothing but hunt, and he is constantly running up to town. As I keep a horse now, I get him to ride with me sometimes, and he is the same pleasant companion we always used to find him ; but there is a screw loose, I am convinced, and I wish it may be only a single screw. Can you find out if there is any entanglement in London? I heard of him in a box at the play with a pretty girl not long ago, and he is just the man to make a fool of himself in that way by marrying a " penniless lass " without pedigree.

' I notice that, like Midshipman Easy, he has been flying the flag of equality and the rights of man lately, quoting from " Black Gowns and Red Coats," and clinching his assertions with lines from Moore's melodies. You know he was always a maudlin politician, but he wants looking after now more than ever.'

This letter of Outram's contained so good an anecdote that I must interrupt my narrative and bring it in :

' My horse-keeping has been the cause of a rather comical adventure. Archdeacon Chart lately asked me to ride over and take a Sunday morning service at an out-of-the-way village called Peartree, which is under sequestration. My chaplain's duties don't detain me on Sunday morning, so I consented, and went. I was received by an old woman who had been

tolling the bell. The church was one mass of decay, deal boxes, mice, and mustiness. A yellow surplice hung on the altar-rails (for there was no vestry), in which garment having endued myself, I read prayers duet-wise with the old woman. It was not until I got up into the pulpit that I saw my congregation—seven, all told—who were each individually composing themselves to slumber in his or her most favourite attitude. In a quarter of an hour everyone was sound asleep. I stopped my homily; no one stirred. I pronounced the Benediction; no one stirred. I came down from the pulpit, divested myself of my surplice, went to the door, and let myself out, without any movement on the part of my sleeping congregation. Then—I think Satan must have prompted me—I turned the key in the door, and rode back to Oxford.'

The part of this letter which referred to my Irish friend certainly made me not a little anxious, chiming as it did with my own apprehensions, so I wrote to Malone that I would meet him in London after Christmas. On my arrival at Long's I found him very comfortably installed there, and in the full vortex of those distractions to which the followers of his special cult were so much addicted. As we sat at dinner on Monday evening, I was told piecemeal of engagements to 'hops' for Tuesday, Wednesday, and it seemed to me every other 'lawful' day, to use the

Scottish phraseology, and when we met at a pretty late breakfast on Tuesday, he had evidently something on his mind of more than ordinary moment.

‘You must come to Weippert’s to-night,’ he pleaded ; ‘I shall be there with Laura Maurice, not later than twelve, and I want her to talk to you.’

‘Why to me?’ I asked.

‘Because I want you to give her good advice. Poor girl ! she is very uncomfortable at home.’

‘As if I could put right the little flirt’s domestic troubles ! Depend upon it mamma has been telling her she goes out too much with you. If that is so, remember I shall take the mother’s side, for the old lady is quite right.’

‘I don’t care, if you will only promise to come, old fellow. I know you are going to the play, but you can come on and just be in the right time.’ So I agreed.

Weippert’s presented a phase of London life which in these days could not be revived. London is too huge, and everything is on too magnificent a scale. Fifty years ago, when theatrical, literary, Bohemian London had its borders from Hyde Park Corner to the Temple stairs, it was possible to realize Mr. Hollingshead’s dream of a rendezvous for the small hours, where good-fellowship and easy conversation, apart from vice and extravagance, were the order of

the night, and artists of all professions and of both sexes could meet and enjoy the dance, and each other's society, undisturbed by the grosser element.

It might be too much to assert that vice never showed its brazen front there, and that extravagance never signalized itself in the career of some of the patrons of the entertainment; but these were, after all, the accidents, not the essentials, of the gathering; and the class of partners whose society attracted men like Malone, in their plain merinos and muslins, were as great a contrast to the bedizened chorus-girl of to-day as are the extravagant demands of the latter upon the lavishness of her admirers, to the simple tribute of gloves, flowers, and four-wheelers which contented the Kates and Lauras of the Percy Street set, or the perpetual fountains of questionable champagne, which are the elixir of life to the modern figurante, to the simple stout or temperate lemonade, which was stimulant enough to enable the ballet-girl of that day to waltz and polka as heartily as if she had not been on the stage from eight to eleven, and was not due for rehearsal at noon the next day.

Nor were the male frequenters of Weippert's the mere empty gilded pelicans of the present period. Here and there you might recognise a Guardsman, who would very likely be chaffed by the future hero of the Mont Blanc entertainment for coming there to

get up his dancing in the "off" season; but the genial Albert and his literary allies were the type of the company.

The scene of our terpsichorean diversions was in striking contrast to the velvet-covered, gaily-decorated, brilliantly-lighted saloons which the public of to-day demand at their places of entertainment. Scanty dingy drapery and cloudy mirrors were all that relieved the bareness of the walls, or distinguished them from those of an ordinary auction-room. The music was good, and the floor tolerable; and, *voilà tout*, we were easily satisfied in those days.

I did not see Malone when I first entered the room, but after running the gauntlet of my acquaintance I espied him ensconced with his partner in a corner, deep in the closest confabulation. The lady caught sight of me first, and starting up, took my arm.

'Please see me home, Paul,' she whispered in a broken voice. 'I must go home at once.'

'Do so, my dear fellow,' said Malone in my other ear, 'and come back to Bob Croft's; I can't go to bed until I have seen you again.'

With this, he wrung the lady's passive hand, and disappeared.

When I had cloaked and shawled my fair charge, and we were rumbling in a growler towards Camden Town, where the modest ménage of Mrs. Maurice was

situate, I was considerably taken aback by a fit of almost hysterical weeping, in which Miss Laura indulged, until I was fairly compelled to assume the paternal part which Malone had assigned to me, and in a consoling tone to inquire what was the matter.

She was so miserable, she sobbed out at last; she would never see Terry again.

'But, my dear child'—I expect she was a year or two older than I was, but one must assume experience when one is cast for the 'heavy father'—'what has gone wrong? He hasn't behaved badly, I hope?'

'Oh no; yes—no—he is a silly, and it won't do. He wants me to—to—to'—sobs—'to marry him.'

'And you told him you wouldn't think of it, I suppose; well, that was very sensible. He wouldn't do for you.'

'So you think, I dare say,' said the damsel, firing up and pulling herself together; 'but he likes me, and I like him—only——'

'Only what? You had better tell him the real reason, if you haven't done so already; he must know some time or another.'

'Well, I tried to tell him, but I couldn't.' Here a fresh burst of grief came on. 'I'm married already.'

Here was a discovery, which, embarrassing as it

certainly was,' seemed providential. By judicious sympathy I at length elicited her story.

A man—a gentleman—known to some of her relations, had for some time proffered his suit to her. She did not care much for him, but an aunt, who thought him an eligible match, had pressed her to accept him, and finally brought about a secret wedding. Then she found that he was under a cloud.

'He's a college man, you see, like you and Terry; but he has got into disgrace with his family for leaving Oxford, and they have nothing more to say to him. But they have given him some money, with which he has set up a cigar divan, and soon he hopes to come and bring me there to live with him.'

'I hope the marriage is all right,' I said.

'Oh yes; my uncle, who is a parish clerk in the City, got the banns asked, and witnessed the wedding. He says my husband's uncle is a Bishop, and that he has lots of influential relations.'

'And he was at Oxford, you say; I wonder if I know him.'

'I don't think you do,' was the reply—'at least, he does not know you; but he knows Terry, and does not like him.'

'And yet you go out with Terry, just the same.'

'Well, my husband says no one must know at present of our marriage, and I am to go on exactly

as before ; and the Irishman is the last man that they would think his wife would be with.'

By this time we had arrived at our destination, and though no name had passed our lips, I felt convinced that I knew who her husband was, and that she knew it also, while her own suspicions as to his true character chimed in with mine.

When I had seen her safely within her mother's doors, I half hesitated whether I should return to the rendezvous which Malone had given me. It was one of the most nefarious of those scandalous dens, which existed at that time under licensed authority, yclept night-houses—taverns, that is to say, which, opening at the mirk midnight of peaceful men, kept their portals ajar till dawn, for the benefit of those minions of the moon who eschew the light of day, and seek their lairs at sunrise. I suppose now it would have to call itself a club ; then it was a public-house of the ordinary type. What the ostensible sign was I do not recollect, for it was always known by the name of its landlord, a huge foul-mouthed ruffian, who by dint of some shrewdness, an air of boisterous joviality, and unmatchable impudence, managed to keep his motley crew of customers within a certain limit of decorum, so that he became a sort of household word with men who professed admiration for the eccentric, and constituted his tavern a place of assignation for those

who, like Malone and I, were desirous of foregathering in the small hours of morning.

'Go and get a bottle of the 1815 port out of bin No. 2222, just under the Opera Colonnade,' bellowed this worthy as I entered his club-room, reeking with smoke and fumes of hot drink, where some five-and-twenty scamps of both sexes sat at tables with a variety of liquors before them.

'Here comes another collegian—hall knowledge, like the sailor's owl. How is my friend the Vice-Chancellor, right reverend sir?'

'No drink for me to-night, Bob. I've come to fetch home my young friend there, whose kitchen chimney is on fire.'

He was just commencing a Rabelaisian retort, when a noise at another table attracted his ever-attentive ear.

'No cards here, I tell you. Stow that, Black Jack; you know the rules of the house.'

'I know you're an old b—— humbug,' growled the fellow whom he had addressed, one of those horrible hangers-on of the prize-ring who thief and maul and hector, and pass off their cowardly brutality for manliness, because they do not carry a knife. He was making up to a puffy semi-comatose drunkard, a mere boy, whose companion was—there could be no mistaking him—Wilderspin.

'You let that youngster alone, I tell you,' repeated Croft with a big oath; 'I won't have anyone robbed here.'

'Robbed, by George!' said the man Jack; 'much he's likely to have to be robbed of when that Oxford wild-cat has got him in tow. He'd take the skin off a Jew, and the sheeny'd never find him out till it was done.'

Wilderspin made a move as if to confront the bully, who seemed in no wise eager for an encounter, though evidently egged on by two or three blackguards of the same stamp.

'Put that fellow Jack out,' said Bob, and the pot-boy, an active light-weight boxer, edged himself between Jack and his backers, and with the assistance of one of the women deftly shouldered the disorderly member of the company out at the door.

Malone and I took advantage of the confusion to make our exit also without beat of drum.

'You saw that scoundrel,' said Malone to me, as we found ourselves upon the deserted flags of the Hay-market pavement. It was drawing near the hour—there is one such in the twenty-four in London itself—when 'the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest'—ay, even in this life. A few tipsy shrieks in the far distance, and the champing of the cab-horses on the stand, were all the noises we heard.

Black Jack, with a deep curse, had slipped into a corner where he could keep his eye upon the door of the tavern. We paced leisurely northwards.

‘What scoundrel?’ I replied. ‘We’ve left plenty in there, and a choice specimen behind us outside.’

‘Pooh!’ retorted Malone, ‘answer me not with a fool-born jest—I mean that wretch Wilderspin. You must have seen him doing the twopenny Mephistopheles to that cad of a Faust.’

‘Let him gang his ain gait, as the Scotsmen say, my dear Terence; you need not complain when you lose sight of him altogether.’

Just then—we had only got a score of yards or so away—we heard the voices of men issuing from Bob Croft’s, a whistle, and the drawing up of a hansom. We halted, and looked back. The night was clear, so that we could plainly see whatever took place in the light of the lamp opposite the tavern door. The persons who came out were Wilderspin and his friend, whom I now remembered as the only son of a cotton lord, who in his native Manchester had acquired by his wealth and ostentation the euphonious alias of Lord Stinkobrass. Failing to curb his son and heir in his aspirations after fast life, the senior subsidized Wilderspin to act as bodyguard to the Brazen Calf. As they emerged, Black Jack darted from his lair, and caught the drunken youth’s arm.

We saw Wilderspin wrench him away, and thrust the boy into the cab. We heard indistinctly angry mutterings of altercation. The bully, with a shrill whistle through his fingers, put himself in fighting attitude, trying to bar Wilderspin's retreat to the cab until his associates could come up.

All this happened as quickly as I can write it. Wilderspin, without a moment's hesitation, ran in upon the bruiser, deftly avoiding his blow, and, seizing him by the legs, threw him right over his head. The wretched fellow came down on the pavement with a dull thud like a sack. Wilderspin jumped into the cab, which went off as fast as the horse could travel, just as the posse of Bob Croft's customers sallied forth from the tavern, and found a policeman newly arrived upon the scene, striving to lift the prone carcass of the fallen giant.

'He's done for, by Heaven!' cried Malone. And dead he was, the vertebræ of the neck broken, and the head hanging limp and lifeless.

'Yes, he's gone,' said the policeman, and sprung his rattle. One or two of the group began to sidle off.

'Some of them blarsey swells tripped the cove up. 'Ere's two on 'em,' interjected a ragged facsimile of the defunct.

A hysterical half-drunken drab began to wail, and babble of foul play.

'Hold your jaw, Pineapple!' said the myrmidon of the law; 'these gents was thirty yards off. I know the cove as throwed him, and the cabby as well. We'll produce 'em at the inquest, never fear.'

'Shall we be required at the inquest?' said I.

'Think not, sir,' said a smart sergeant now in command; 'but I'll take your names and addresses, hif you please.'

These given, we departed; and all the way to Bond Street I strove to convince Malone that he might consider the last act of his flirtation played out, and the curtain rung down on Miss Laura for good and all. That she had a husband I was compelled to disclose, but as to his identity, although I saw that Malone had what my Yorkshire groom called a presence o' mind (presentiment) that he was Wilderspin, the fact was, like that abominable Scottish jury's *tertium quid*—Not proven; so I prudently refrained from suggesting it. Indeed, my chief anxiety now was to get Malone away from the scene of these agitating occurrences, and take him back to Oxford again, which, to my great joy, I succeeded in doing next day.

I may as well finish the narrative of the homicide, by narrating how the police failed to produce Wilderspin at the inquest. Having driven straight to the lodgings of his companion, the Brazen Calf, he hastily

packed a couple of portmanteaus, and took the early train to Southampton, where the Calf had a yacht in the Solent. They embarked at once, and were at sea before the police had been able to follow them up. They dodged about in the Channel for a few days, and then landed in Cornwall, where Wilderspin had a friend who was captain of a mine. In this lurking-place he secluded himself until the inquest was over, and all inquiry after him had ceased, and then sailed for Liverpool with his charge, upon whom the events of that memorable night, and perhaps the compulsory abstinence consequent upon their escape, must have produced a most salutary effect, to judge, at least, from the after-career of the millionaire's heir, well known in later years as a blue-ribbon member of Parliament, a philanthropist, and a frequent chairman at Exeter Hall meetings.

But it may be asked, How could such an incident so soon pass into oblivion? Although journalistic enterprise existed before the era of the Great Exhibition, the press had not assumed that far-reaching omniscience which is its latter-day characteristic. The inquest was duly held, and the body of the deceased identified as that of a man of bad repute, who had been repeatedly convicted of violent assaults, and had met with his death in the very act of an unprovoked attack upon two gentlemen,

and neither the cabman nor the policeman was able to define the exact cause of his fall, or, indeed, to say positively that anyone had touched him. The jury found a verdict of accidental death, and the two or three papers which noticed the proceedings reported them in the briefest and baldest style.

Wilderspin, as I afterwards learned on undeniable authority, found his way back to London, and to his wife, but not to the cigar divan. His constitution, tried severely by his reckless courses, gave way, and he languished, a pitiful wreck, for a few years, tended to the last by his active little better-half, who followed his remains to the grave with a sigh, which must have had almost as much of relief as of sorrow in it.

The spirit of University reformation was at that period unusually active with my friend. Another vagary came into his ingenious paradoxical brain, which he proceeded to illustrate in practice. He had always complained of the indignity, as he phrased it, of being turned out of college rooms, and compelled to take refuge in lodgings. As he observed—and with perfect truth—he had always set an edifying example to his juniors as to the regulation requirements of appearing in academical costume and attending chapel. To be compelled to become a mere denizen of the city, instead of enjoying the cloistered life of the college, was undeserved degradation.

Such abundance of vacant rooms, too, at some of the colleges! Why not be admitted as a gentleman commoner M.A. at All Souls', for instance? Surely, if the Warden were properly approached, he might let him occupy a set of rooms. So in the long-run he talked himself into a determination to call upon the head of that college, and lay his case before him in person.

The Warden of All Souls' just then was the same of whom the satirist wrote:

'Gaisford and Sneyd each other's lectures seek,
And one learns manners and the other Greek.'

So that the self-accredited petitioner was received with a stately courtesy which rather alarmed as well as disarmed him when he perforce reflected how preposterous his request would appear. After a few ineffectual hems and haws, he managed to stammer out an apologetic reference to the liberty he had taken, under circumstances, he might venture to say, of some distress.

'Distress?' echoed the polite and kindly Warden; 'of what description? Not pecuniary, I should hope—at least, your appearance does not suggest it.'

How he got out of the presence Malone was quite unable to explain. He asseverated that he remembered nothing until he found himself in the street, laughing at his own discomfiture.

These, however, were but episodes in the campaign

which he intended to wage against existing anomalies, the chief of which he chose to consider the ordinance against the turf; and he wrote to me asking me to be present at the realization of the plot he had so long been hatching. A Brasenose Master of Arts, one Starkieson, had agreed, he wrote, to make a match with him to ride their own horses a mile on the flat, under Jockey Club conditions, on Port Meadow, and he also informed me that he had sent a notice to the junior proctor, Shanks, a man well known to us both, in order that he might make a formal demonstration of authority for Malone to traverse. As the other party to this remarkable arrangement had already acquired in the University the alias of Starkinsane, I fully expected some catastrophe; and while I endeavoured by every argument I could muster to dissuade Malone, I could not help anticipating a highly comic demonstration.

On my arrival at Oxford, therefore, I declined to identify myself with the Irish rebel, and arranged with a well-known University athlete, Collingwood, to drive down to the course with him in a hansom. It occurred to me as we drove down to ask my companion, who had not yet put on his gown, though of Master's standing, what would be his position should the proctor, as was probable, appear in person? His reply was to the effect that he had talked it over with

Shanks, who had arranged not to see him unless it were absolutely necessary.

‘He does not expect,’ he added, ‘no more do I, that many undergraduates will put in an appearance after the prohibitory notice which has been issued, and you and I, being in a certain way specially interested, will not be classed with the defiers of authority.’

So, when we had arrived at the part of Port Meadow where a tent and some small flags gave a slight indication of a race-course, and observed an Oxford fly lumbering in our rear with a bulldog (a proctor’s bulldog, of course) perched upon the box, Collingwood simply instructed our driver to keep the back of the cab towards the other conveyance, and hinted that I had better leave him in possession and go and speak to the proctor.

Shanks—he was, I may say, attired in full war-paint, cap, velvet sleeves and all—greeted me cordially, and explained that his position was very simple, all he had to do being to give a formal prohibition, and then simply observe events.

‘I suppose,’ he said, ‘Collingwood brought you down in that cab? He may eventually be a little disgusted if we find it necessary to produce him as a witness in the Vice-Chancellor’s Court, but unless that is imperative we shall take no notice. Here is my written prohibition, of which each of the men has

had a copy, and my coming, as you see, has scared away any member of the University who had a notion of attending'—there were not, in fact, a dozen spectators—'so that you and I and Collingwood are the only witnesses of this breach of the law; and when it is over I shall drive back to Oxford. It seems to me that the sanity of the Brasenose man and the judgment of the Gem are about on a par.'

While thus conversing the competitors had appeared, got up in full jockey costume, and were proceeding to take a preliminary canter; but before they got under way Malone's horse stumbled badly, having, I believe, put his foot in a hole, and came heavily down upon his rider, whose leg, in his effort to hold the horse up, got twisted in such a way that the weight of the animal came dead upon it and fractured it, the pain being so excessive that the unlucky rider fainted away, and lay insensible by the side of his horse, who, after struggling to his feet, quietly stood, and allowed himself to be caught and led away. Collingwood, who had a smattering of medical lore, seeing the turn which things had taken, thought fit to make his appearance on the scene, and extemporized splints, bandages, and a litter, on which the wounded jockey was placed in the fly, in a prone position, Collingwood undertaking to see him safely

into the hospital; while Shanks and I, after accompanying them in my cab so far, sought our several quarters.

Of course the tragi-comedy, which had replaced the farce intended to be played on Port Meadow, was in some degree an embarrassment to the University authorities, who hardly liked to institute a prosecution against a man laid up with a fractured limb. Ignoring Malone, therefore, they proceeded to fine Starkieson £5, which he paid under protest, and forthwith appealed to the Chancellor, who, as might be expected, referred the question to his legal assessor, it being understood, at Malone's earnest request, that as soon as he was convalescent he should be placed in the same position, and the joint case argued and decided. It was not thought probable that waiting for his recovery would delay the cause much—for he was a healthy subject, and made progress rapidly, in spite of an impatience of restraint which earned him many black looks and gloomy prognostications from doctors and nurses. But, as he observed, he would have scarcely curbed his restlessness as much as he actually did, but for his impatience to regain his health, that he might pursue his contention to the bitter end. That end, however, never came to him; indeed, I much question whether the main point in dispute, the

limits of the privileges of M.A.'s, has ever been decided; possibly,

'Adhuc sub judice lis est.'

Starkieson, it is true, recovered his £5 on account of some informality in his sentence, but long ere this Malone had ceased to be in a position to champion the liberties of Oxonians, for he had been deprived of his own.

The Encumbered Estates Court in Ireland was the untimely intervener which stayed his hand thus rudely. A decree had been obtained there for a compulsory settlement of the charges upon his property. He became recalcitrant to the last degree, refused with indignation to take any steps which would in any way assist what he denominated an atrocious invasion of private rights, and finally he found himself not only unable to satisfy the mortgages on the estate, but committed to Whitecross Street Prison to boot for contempt of court.

When he obtained his formal discharge, true to his determination to keep his head above water without corks, he started a plan quite in his own peculiar vein. He became, like Hook's Jack Brag, the tenant of a door in a West-End thoroughfare; that is, he obtained the right of putting a brass plate and a letter-box thereupon; only, the affiche in this instance informed the passer-by that the Universal Agency

(Terence Malone, Esq., Secretary) were prepared to find for you horses, carriages, yachts, guns, servants, or anything you might write to them for; would make contracts for you, look after your house or your goods in your absence; or, in short, make themselves generally useful, in the style of the clown when Astley's was still an institution: 'What can I come for to fetch, for to carry, for to bring?'

I fear the general, or at any rate the paying, public fought rather shy of so plausible and comprehensive a prospectus. Most of the customers who presented themselves were of the type of the settlers in Nephelococcygia—

'All who are dunned for debts and sick of troubles,
All who have blown or been blown up by bubbles.'

Once, during the brief existence of the agency, Malone was fain to knock at the door of the abode of an old friend, attended by a huge gaunt wolf-hound, which some speculators had brought with a view of disposing of it to an Empress, and had confided to the care of the Universal Agency, but had neglected to make the remittances which would enable the animal to be provided with its needful provender. Poor Malone in consequence was compelled to solicit a £5 note, not for himself, as he very truthfully pleaded, but for the dog; and I verily believe that the fear of being reduced to such a strait again

served as his most cogent inducement to abandon his experiment.

The brass plate disappeared in the second year of its existence; the agency dissolved into its original element—smoke; and the secretary was lost to sight. Not a trace of his whereabouts could any of his friends discover, so completely had he managed to efface himself, until, after a lapse of several months, I received a letter from Outram, now spending and being spent in a nobly philanthropic scheme for making choristers of the sons of poor clergymen.

‘I had been,’ he wrote, ‘dining with Barkby the organist, at his house in St. John’s Wood, and as it was a lovely evening I thought a walk back to Portland Place, where I was staying, would be pleasant. As I strolled at a gentle pace down the side-walk of one of those quiet sylvan roads, I noticed a four-wheeled cab crawling (I think that is the correct expression) close alongside me; but, as I did not intend to engage it, I took no notice, till suddenly the driver struck up that air from my cantata which gained Malone his nickname of the Gem of the Sea. I started with astonishment, and cried out: “Malone! Is that you?” “Yes,” said he, “and you’re the only man I’d betray myself to.” I saw a big tear running down his cheek. “I’ve begun life anew, and the old scenes have passed away, but I

couldn't help speaking to you." He drove slowly by my side for half a mile, I dare say, and we had a long talk; but I could not persuade him to tell me where he lived or much about himself. He says his prospects are good, and he is saving money. He is not much altered—a little aged, perhaps, and wears a close-cropped beard, but looks fat and well, with good, neat clothes and a scrupulously clean cab and harness and a well-groomed horse; in fact, quite the aristocrat cabby. He told me that he drove a hansom at night sometimes, but not in the daytime, as he was afraid of being recognised at the West End. We had quite a tender parting, and the tear I saw upon his face when I first met him was not the only one which found its way to the surface that night.'

My reply to this piece of news was an inquiry if Outram had taken the number of the cab or the driver's badge, and, when I found he had not done so, to institute a search at Scotland Yard, which proved futile, no such name as Malone appearing in the registers, either as owner or driver of a cab.

Several more years had passed over, when circumstances imposed upon me the duty of acting as the temporary sub-editor of an educational periodical. In connection with this work I had to spend the whole day in the City once or twice a week, and I also not unfrequently came across men who had

either moved in the literary circles of my younger days or who had known the celebrities who did. Thus there slid into my horizon a clever water-colour artist, named Piper (Peter Piper, of course, to the esoteric circle where I had first met him, years before)—a man who had been one of the satellites of Albert Smith, and frequently participated in the high jinks at Weippert's.

'I don't often meet one of the old division,' was my remark to him; 'I suspect not a great many of the men are left now, and as to the girls——'

'Come with me,' he said, 'and I'll show you one of them to-day. We will have our luncheon at the restaurant she keeps—at least, she and her husband—though you will only remember her in the unmarried state, when she was Laura Maurice.'

'But Laura's husband died,' I replied. 'You didn't know him. He was a shocking scamp.'

'Well, she has found another, then,' quoth Piper—'a nice-looking, well-spoken fellow, too; I should say an Irish horse-dealer.'

So down a short flight of shallow stairs we went, to one of those basement eating-rooms, common then, and not quite extinct now, in the City; and there was Madame Laura herself, sure enough, plump and matronly, with just a streak or two of gray perceptible amid her sleek black hair.

Vastly pleased she was to see me. It was so seldom, she said, that any of the real old friends of her girlhood turned up; and plenty we had to say about Tom, Dick and Harry, and their old flames, Kate and Sophie and half a dozen more, most of whom I was glad to hear were doing well; though some names had to be dismissed with a sigh and a shake of the head.

‘The old man will be glad to see you,’ she added.

‘Who is the old man?’ I said. ‘Tell me your name now.’

‘Oh, you wouldn’t recognise it,’ laughed she; ‘but he knows you all the same.’

‘I knew your first husband’s name when you thought I didn’t,’ was my reply. ‘Tell me the first letter of the second.’

‘G,’ she responded, laughing.

At that moment I was caught in a regular Hibernian grip by the back—I believe the artistic appellation is ‘the scruff of the neck’—in such a fashion that I could not turn my head or see who my assailant was; but I heard a soft chuckle, and a muttering sound of:

‘’Tis little Paul, little Paul himself, by jabbers!’

I scrambled out of his clutches.

‘Malone, you old villain, respect my cloth!’

‘I’m not Malone any longer, and I don’t respect one inch of yer body or breeches, carcase or clothes.’

'Then, who are you, you transmigrated Celtic soul?'

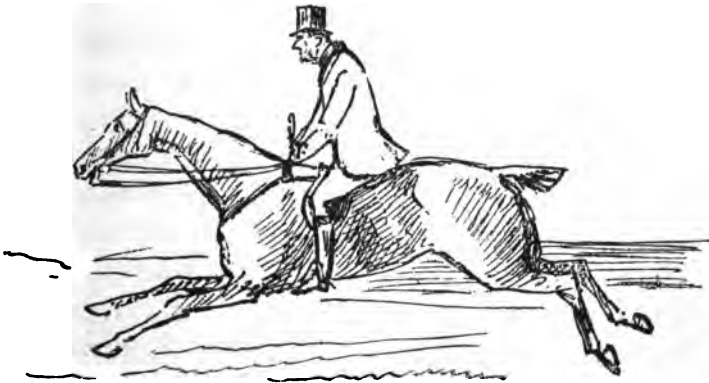
'There,' said he, pointing to a signboard—'there is my name for the last ten years: "Terence Gem, licensed to sell liquor on the premises"; I'd dragged the old family name through the mud bad enough, I thought, and, as you all called me the Gem, I'd not sully the Malone with cab-driving but take a new name. And luck from the very first start did the Gem bring me—a good business, good health, a jewel of a wife—now, Laura, none of your little lovin's before strangers—and at last this nice little bar for her, and a pretty place with neat stabling down at Cricklewood, where many a clever youngster I'd buy at the country fairs has been schooled, and sold for a flyer in the shires; and cobs too, galore. As I get older cobs come more natural like.'

'You see,' broke in Laura, 'when poor Willy died I gave up the stage and took a little shop—confectionery and so forth—to keep me and mother, for my brother Ted had got married and gone to Australia. And then we used Mr. Gem's cabs, and then Terry himself came to drive us one day, and I knew him again in a minute, though he didn't recognise me—Now, Terry, be quiet; it's the truth—but we soon began the old boy and girl business again. You were not very friendly to us in those days, Paul.'

'I'd no opportunity,' I pleaded.

'Well, we had the opportunity, and we took it; and we're glad to see you and all old friends, and show them that there are not two happier people in the world.'

Here let me leave my friend. Not that I did leave him, but often saw him, thriving and prosperous, bringing up his children, in accordance with his new ideas of life, as the sons of Mr. Gem the horse-dealer, who have to make their own way in the world. One seems to be a highly successful business man, and another has got a scholarship at Cooper's Hill. I expect they will found a new family and make a fortune; but however great the lustre of their names, they will never sparkle in my eyes like the original Gem of the Sea.





THE SCOUT'S BOY.

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THERE are whole classes of men whom it has pleased the world at large to label with some uncomplimentary character which, *per fas et nefas*, it is insisted shall adhere to the members of that particular calling. It is by no means unusual for a sober Englishman, unused to the jesting mood, and in his daily life relying most implicitly upon his legal adviser, to express himself about lawyers as if the stock definition of the difference between an attorney and a solicitor were a matter of serious truth, instead of a mere humorous word-quibble; while the Joe Millers which connect cabbage with tailors, sand with grocers, and the cow with the iron tail with purveyors of milk, never seem to grow stale.

Now and then, of course, this style of generalization betrays its adept into a false position, from which he finds it difficult to escape. I remember an old Warwickshire clergyman who attended the Bishop's visitation with his Trafalgar medal on his gown, and who was reported to have gained his preferment by the same kind of law of selection which, as the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' tells us, handed over Eskdale to the Buccleuch; his future parishioners being so 'forward, fierce, and rude' that their gentle patron deemed a man who had not only been one of Nelson's youngsters, but ridden in the cavalry brigade of Wellington's Spanish army, the most likely man to deal with them, a rule which, after he had tamed the warlike pride of the village bully in a stand-up fight, he exercised to the great amelioration of the mining population. This gentleman, on the occasion of a clerical meeting, found himself at the board

'Where all above him were a solemn row
Of priests and deacons, so were all below,'

sitting by a total stranger, and almost inevitably the conversation glided into the esoteric channel of the decadence of the clerical profession.

'Yes,' said his neighbour; 'since the peace [of 1815] we are swamped by a most undesirable set of men from the army.'

'I beg your pardon,' the Rector of B—— interposed;

'I can hardly admit that sweeping proposition : I was in the army myself.'

'Oh, pardon me,' returned the man of peace beside him. 'I retract; but at all events you will admit that a man who has been in the navy ought not to enter the Church!'

But the most maligned set of men, to my thinking, are the college scouts, of whom the title of the book—which a clever but unlucky man of the name of Hewlett wrote, and got Theodore Hook to edit, and Hablot Browne to draw grotesque designs for—'Peter Priggins,' gave in the grossest form the popular estimate—calumnious, as I believe, for though the college servant's ideas of *meum* and *tuum* were guided by a limited doctrine of prescriptive right, yet not only did he show much greater moderation in his dealings with masters of every degree of inconsiderate carelessness than could have been expected, but, moreover, frequently displayed not only fidelity but discretion towards his young patrons, to whose relations with him the saying about heroes and valets most pertinently applied. What a scout frequently put up with, or overlooked—what secrets were honourably kept, which if divulged would have injured the collegian's reputation—nay, how frequently a kind hint or well-meant word of advice to a raw youngster from an old college servant too often fell upon deaf ears!

Of all the estimable specimens of this genus who were in Oxford during my time, I could hardly select a better than old Amos Coffin, scout of No. 5 staircase in Brasenose College. He had waited on the fathers of more than one of his young masters, and had come to regard them with the pride and affection of an old family retainer. He watched their doings in the lecture-room and the schools, the river or the cricket-field, with anxiety or approbation; he knew all their home treasures and household penates, and kept a vigilant eye upon the old bed-maker when she exercised her broom or flourished her duster in too haphazard a fashion in the close vicinity of some precious and perishable possession; he was always willing to recommend an application to the clothes-cleaner, in lieu of too hasty discarding of some soiled or mud-stained article of clothing; he would let fall a quiet hint of warning to a man of sporting tastes whose athletic feats he thought were assuming the dangerous form of 'outrunning the constable,' or to a noisy man whose animal spirits seemed likely to involve him in collision with the tutors; or he would contrive to let a freshman know, under the rose, what society in college really thought of some plausible *vaurien* who was seeking to fasten his acquaintance upon the neophyte. In a word, if a solitary youngster made of old Amos a guide, he had no reason to

regret his confidence, and the scout was esteemed accordingly.

This well-deserved estimation was indicated in the ordinary University parlance by conferring upon its object a special sobriquet. How ingenious Oxford men can be in devising new and recondite bywords surpasses belief. No one would expect that 'the chief mourner' would designate the most cheerful man in college, because he was first after the bier, only, like lay brother Peter of Ingoldsby fame,

'His beer with an e was his bier with an i;'

or that a famous white hunter should be known as Gehazi, a 'lepper' white as snow; yet these facetiæ one could trace up to their sources. Why, however, Coffin should become Crumbs is a puzzle far more difficult of solution, and in all probability was a distant reference to some incident long forgotten. But Crumbs Amos became; and by far the larger portion of the denizens of Brasenose, even in the tutorial circle of the senior common-room, his true patronymic was entirely lost sight of.

If Crumbs the Elder was respected and valued for his sterling integrity, his only boy—'young Crumbs'—was equally a favourite for his good looks and winning manner. From the day that little Joel Coffin, a curly-headed urchin of five or six summers,

was first brought by his father as a treat to see the gentlemen's pretty rooms, up to the period of the events which I am narrating, he had been a *persona grata* to all orders and degrees of men in college, with the exception perhaps of some of the other scouts, who were jealous of the ascendancy of old Amos. The fat porter unbent his Jove-like brow when the merry laugh of the child was heard outside his lodge, and laid in store of bull's-eyes and liquorice (Spanish juice it was called in those days of infantine remembrance) to tempt him into his den; indeed, but for the preventive vigilance of his father, young Joel would have had sweets enough to ruin the constitution of an ostrich. As John Bossewell, gentleman, says in his 'Armorie of Honor,' when treating of the musion, 'called catte of the Greekes,' all young creatures are 'swift, pliant, and merry'; and even our Vice-Principal, Mr. Badger, who had cultivated the art of sarcastic churlishness to the very acme of refinement, smiled a grim smile when the tiny monkey, escaped from his father's wardship, scampered over the grass plot to the pedestal

'Where whited Cain the curse of heaven defies,
And leaden slumbers seal his brother's eyes'—

until it pleased the college to remove the 'silly statua,' when the figures were discovered to have only an outer coat or skin of lead, and to be composed, like

their prototypes, of the dust of the ground—up which portentous edifice he proceeded to scramble, to Amos's intense agony and Badger's corresponding amusement. Badger, however, was evidently ashamed at having allowed his risible muscles to relax *coram publico*; and the senior commoner, a pet abhorrence of the Vice's, experienced the full force of the reaction. That very evening in chapel, giving out, after his usual blundering fashion, the wrong chapter, he was interrupted by, 'Here beginneth no such thing!' and as he fumbled at the eagle, Badger, in the strident tones of a saw-sharpening voice, hurled at him from his stall the correct portion of Holy Writ, and sent him down the next morning.

By the time, however, that I had become a denizen of these antique walls, Joel Crumbs was in the second stage of Shakespeare's seven ages, carrying his satchel as a day-scholar to the foundation school of St. Audrey's, and his father wisely discouraged his visits to college even on the occasional holidays which occurred in term-time. He did, however, pay more or less regular visits to college; for he had become a great favourite of one of the junior Fellows, a mathematical tutor of the name of Black, who posed as an advanced thinker and an unconventional University reformer. He could hardly be fairly described as a Liberal, inasmuch as, with the exception of denouncing

anyone whom he disliked, or who showed any disapprobation of his particular modes of thought and action, as a 'stupid old Tory,' he was about as narrow-minded and bigoted in his adherence to his own catchwords as any Tory could have been. It must be acknowledged that he had a decided talent for unpleasant retort, as when old Haverill, notoriously the greatest bore who occupied the pulpit at St. Mary's, said to him one day, 'Why do you select Sunday morning for a long country walk?' and he replied, 'Because I prefer sermons in stones to sermons from sticks.'

But the constant aim to run counter to other people's convictions and modes of life does not conciliate their favour any more than the assumption of vast mental superiority, so Mr. Black was pretty cordially detested and disapproved of among his compeers in the college common-room. No one disliked his 'tricks and manners' (to quote Miss Dolls) more cordially than did the old Vice-Principal, whose cynic retorts were quite as rude and bit deeper than Black's epigrammatic sarcasms; and above all other subjects of dissension between the two men, the constant presence of 'that boy' in Black's rooms was to the elder man a never-failing source of irritation, since a graduate, and a Fellow to boot, could not be dealt with by direct prohibition, and Badger was

obliged to content himself with acrimonious verbal criticism.

One day I received a note from the Vice-Principal—I was then in my third year, and a senior member of the undergraduate section of the residents—requesting my presence in his rooms, where on my arrival I found two other men of similar standing to myself, who were there in obedience to a like request. When we had taken our seats, the Vice, evidently in considerable perturbation, explained that recently a number of small articles had been missed from rooms in college, and more especially from those in staircase No. 5; and that the guardian of one of the undergraduates had laid a serious complaint, alleging that his ward had lost a considerable sum of money.

‘Now,’ observed Mr. Badger, ‘I have known statements of this kind made where young men find it difficult to account for the absence of cash which ought to have been in their possession; so, as you gentlemen are all senior members of the college, and acquainted most likely with the pursuits and associates of most of its undergraduate members, I have sent for you to ask you to make such inquiries into this painful accusation as you can do with delicacy and propriety, in order that if its validity is established the criminal may be traced.’

It speaks well for Mr. Badger’s acumen that the

person on whose behalf the complaint was made, after taking his degree and being ordained, committed a felony, for which he received a sentence of penal servitude, and has since, as a ticket-of-leave man, been mixed up with many nefarious transactions. We were all inclined to believe that the solution of the mystery would be found in the direction indicated by the Vice-Principal ; and we were surprised as well as shocked when, a day or two afterwards, we learned that young Joel Coffin had been taken red-handed in the act of committing a theft in Black's room. The poor father was heart-broken.

‘ My only boy—so well brought up, and so loved by his mother—to think of his being a thief, and, what is more dreadful still, quite hardened and impenitent. He says he is only doing what Mr. Black taught him, that he was always telling him that all property had been robbed from the poor, and wicked stuff of that sort ; and lent him books which said that everything ought to be divided among the people, and why should he not take his share from those who could afford it ? Mr. Smith [the undergraduate who had been the chief sufferer] would have spent his money much worse than he should, and a lot of rubbish to the same purpose. It will be the death of his poor mother if she sees him in gaol !’

To gaol, however, he did not go ; for though Black

in the first ferment of his indignation sent for a policeman, the porter denied admission to the myrmidon of the law without an order from the Vice-Principal, who very promptly and decidedly took the side of mercy, and a stormy scene ensued, which I fancy would have presented a highly humorous aspect to an uninterested auditor, for the older man revelled in the idea of Black's discomfiture, and gave him such a taste of the cross-examination he might expect if the case came into court as to reduce him to speechless rage, and stony acquiescence in the wisdom of letting the matter drop. How the culprit should be disposed of presented some little difficulty; but the Gordian knot was cut by the interposition of a former Fellow of the college, a quiet little man who had served frequently as a target for Black's smart sayings, who now volunteered to take the boy to a remote country living which he had just accepted, and to give him a home, and look after him until he found a situation for him. This was agreed to, and one episode in my University life thus came to a conclusion.

About ten years afterwards, my name having been added to the Commission of the Peace by our Lord-Lieutenant, I had become *ex officio* a regular attendant at the Board of Guardians of a neighbouring Union in a large suburban village. This is one of those duties hitherto performed ably and discreetly by the

landed gentry of England, which it has seemed good to the collective unwisdom of the nation, at the instigation of certain agitators egged on by the meanest instincts of spite and spleen, to withdraw from the educated and independent class of society. Had the managers of the workhouses themselves been the arbiters of the question, I cannot think that such would have been their verdict, judging by my vivid remembrance of the frequent occasions when an *ex-officio* Guardian has been appealed to for the advice and assistance which his social standing and enlarged experience of the world enabled him to give.

On arriving at the Union workhouse one Board-day, I was met by the matron with a request that I would accompany her to the casual ward, where they had an inmate of by no means a common order—a young woman of ladylike appearance, who had entered her name as Emily Coffin, married woman, and stated in reply to their questions that her husband was in trouble, and that neither his relations nor her own family would be willing to receive her, so that she had been compelled to seek the refuge of the nearest workhouse.

Upon entering the room I recognised her at once as a rather pretty, very silly girl, who had been a boarder in a ladies' school in my own village, where

she had made herself somewhat conspicuous by her giddy and romantic behaviour. Her father was a clergyman of a class now, I think, totally extinct, whose father and grandfather had been curates to non-resident incumbents in the days of pluralities. Men of this type became sons of the soil, and, living on terms of equality with the farmers round them, fell into the position of farmers themselves, bought a few acres of land, and, as non-residence became more and more a thing of the past, eked out an income by taking occasional duty.

Now and then you found among them graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, but more commonly they were provided with a qualification from St. Bees, or had been admitted to orders as literates by some complaisant Bishop. In manners, general education, and behaviour they were not above the level of the class from which they were taken, and might best be described as yeomen clerics. Some of them, no doubt, like Wordsworth's friend Walker of Scathwaite, were deserving of the very highest eulogy for the economy and frugality of their simple lives, and the way in which they brought up their usually large families; but others certainly had more of Parson Trulliber than of Abraham Adams about them, and even among the better sort a very slovenly idea of ritual prevailed.

I remember one old gentleman, much superior to the ordinary run of such incumbents, whose superb church, an architectural masterpiece of a Cardinal in the fifteenth century, was a vast wilderness of crumbling deal boxes, mice, and cobwebs, who found one Sunday morning that he was extremely hoarse. 'If my voice fails,' he said to his daughter, 'you must read the lessons;' and in spite of her remonstrance, she was told to hold herself in readiness.

Sure enough, at the close of the Psalms her father leaned over the high reading-pew, just below which sat the Rectory folks, and in a hoarse whisper said: 'Come up, Twopenny' (her pet name); and up the poor girl had to go, and, with her chin just reaching the level of the folio Bible, do her best to make herself audible to the three or four dozen farmers and their labourers who with their families represented the congregation. Yet, after all, stolid and unmannerly as some of these parsons were, I doubt if they touched so low a level as the scowling savage coadjutor priest, fresh from the squalid discipline of Maynooth, or the underbred licentiate of a minor Anglican theological college, steeped to the very lips in sacerdotal assumption.

Old Harden, the poor girl's father, was a stern, niggardly, upright old man, who regarded his daughter's runaway match with a footman (for so

he described it to me) with a disapprobation almost too deep for words; yet he paid sufficient attention to my remonstrances as to agree to provide a small sum to obtain a temporary asylum for her. It seemed that the husband was a young fellow, somewhat superior both in person and address, who had come into the neighbourhood as the confidential valet of an invalid squire, and that the romantic fancy of the girl had been attracted by his fashionable appearance and conversation. A secret marriage had been the consequence, and she had been living in lodgings at a small town a few miles off until the arrest of her husband on the charge of embezzlement had reduced her to the necessity of taking refuge in the place where I had found her. I naturally inquired why her husband's relatives had not come to her assistance in such a strait, and was told by her in reply that she did not know them. He had been at college, she said—at Oxford; he had been wild there, and his family had cast him off. In a few days the magistrates at Petty Sessions dismissed the charge against her husband, and a grateful letter from her informed me that he had come to claim her, and that they were going to London in search of employment. It was not until I observed, in the newspaper containing a report of the proceedings before the magistrates, that the prisoner's name was

Joel Coffin, that I realized the fact that I had come across the scout's boy once more.

That 'tangled web' which we are said to

' Weave
When first we practise to deceive '

is also the map of life whenever we step outside the confined circle of our own immediate interests. That I should have renewed an association of Oxford days might not be so very wonderful:

' Yet Time, who, like the merchant, lives on 'Change,
For ever varying through his varying range,
Time maketh all things even.'

I was not, as it turned out, to get rid of these restored memories again quickly. During several years which followed, I had two or three letters from Mrs. Coffin. In the first, I remember, she expressed herself cheerfully about her future, as her husband, after going down the hill of adversity so low as to have been a dock labourer, had obtained a situation in the City police, and was employed as a clerk in the Chief Superintendent's office, where his superior education and abilities made his services valuable, though he was hoping for employment in the position of a detective officer. A year or two later she wrote asking for some temporary help during her husband's illness, stating, as her excuse for the application, that

although he had attained to the promotion which he coveted, with its increased pay and prospects, the expenses connected with his investigations were a constant drain upon their ready money. About a twelvemonth after this came a third epistle, hastily written with bad ink on a dirty scrap of paper, mysteriously stating that she was in great trouble, and begging me when next in London to come and see her—her husband had left her.

When, a few days after, I found myself in Bishopsgate Street, from the neighbourhood of which her last communication had been dated, I made inquiry from a policeman on duty as to my way to Green Dragon Row, which was the address she had given. Rather to my astonishment, he answered in a fashion I fancied was confined to the north of the Tweed.

‘I beg your pardon, sir, but what were you wanting with Green Dragon Row?’

‘Well,’ I replied, ‘it seems an odd question of yours, but I don’t mind telling you. I want to see the wife of a member of your own force, a Mrs. Coffin.’

‘Oh, beg your pardon, sir—that rascal Crumbs’s missis, poor woman! One of my mates shall see you down the alley. Stop, though,’ he exclaimed, as if he just recollected something; ‘she’ll be at the stall now, poor soul! come along o’ me, sir. Ah! you’ve

no idea, quiet as we look now, what a 'ell of a place, saving your presence, there is not a hundred yards away from this.'

'What is the matter with Mrs. Coffin?' I inquired; 'and why did you call her husband Crumbs?'

'Because that's the name he goes by now, sir, since he was dismissed the force and took to hagation. He's given his wife the slip—gone to Amerrikey, they say; but I don't feel so sure o' that, and she don't like to round on him, for if she went to the parish she'd lose the little trade she's got, and the child's schooling, and so the scoundrel knows he's safe.'

Thus speaking, we turned into the public footway through the old churchyard of St. Ethelburga, where in a shallow recess in the wall, scantily sheltered by a piece of old carpet, was pitched a stall, with a few apples, nuts, and matches arranged on the board which did duty as a counter, behind which sat a female figure 'wasted with misery,' to use the pathetic term of Holy Writ. Though she could not have been five-and-thirty, the black hollows beneath her eyes, the white streaks in her scanty hair, and her bent and meagre frame, were those of a woman of sixty; while the difficulty with which she seemed to draw every breath, and a cough which, ever and anon came on in paroxysms and seemed to shake her

from head to foot, told the tale of disease far advanced in its inroads into the centres of life. She was unfeignedly glad to see me, and with gasping utterance gave me the outlines of her melancholy story.

It would appear that for some time after her husband joined the police force all went well with them: his ability was recognised, and his good education and manners told in his favour. But he was always restless and irregular in his domestic habits, and was mixed up, as his wife ere long discovered, with dangerous characters, men of doubtful antecedents and foreign refugees of more than questionable reputation, to whom he professed to be attracted by community of sentiment upon political questions, about which he always held what he styled 'advanced' views — expressions of disregard for authority ignored or tolerated by his superior officers as long as he refrained from putting them into action.

At length, however, he became involved in suspicion of complicity in a great Russian forgery, and was detected in giving information to one of the gang of conspirators, a soi-disant patriot, and in the course of an investigation which followed the discovery, he attempted to throw the blame upon a brother officer, and supported his charge by perjury. She had become acquainted with the fact that his father was a

college servant, and, indeed, at one time the old man had assisted them with money ; but now her husband's mother was dead, and his father had retired to an almshouse in Oxford. She herself was conscious that her days were numbered, and her great anxiety was for her child, who was now at a charity school in the City, thanks to the kind patronage of some of those merchant princes whom her husband was so fond of vituperating. She implored me with tearful earnestness to befriend the girl, and if possible to place her, after her own death, in some situation where she might be altogether out of her father's reach.

'Oh, sir, he is a bad man !' she cried—'bad to his parents, bad to his wife, and he will be bad to his child. I could forgive him for his cruelty to me if he would only stay away from us for ever. He has gone as a paid delegate to America, and I hope he may stay there ; for if he thought that I had a pound, or that he could get one out of my people, he would attack them at once. I am glad that he has changed his name, for perhaps Emily may never recognise him.'

Such were the reiterated complaints of the poor woman during the closing months of her life. I used to go to see her in the dangerous quarter where she had been compelled to reside, a row of fine old brick

mansions, where her two rooms boasted far more amplitude of space than many of the six-roomed tenements in new streets in the suburbs, bearing an air of repose and respectability widely at variance with the evil repute assigned to its purlieus by my friend the police sergeant. I thought of it afterwards, when I read the description, in Henry Kingsley's novel of 'Ravenshoe,' of the silence and peaceful vacancy which reigned in the court where the Irish row was just on the point of breaking out (where the virago is depicted in the impossible attitude of scratching her elbows with her arms akimbo); for if it were the Tartarus described by the policeman, it was, in the daytime at least, under a spell like that which Orpheus cast over the classic shades, hushed and placid.

After I had been escorted down once or twice, the shirking or lounging figures whom one occasionally did encounter muttered a sort of recognition. 'Goin' to Mother Coffin,' I could hear them say; and I was assured that unless an aggressive watch-chain or a tall hat provoked interference, I was safe enough. The row of houses, as I afterwards discovered when I bought an old print containing a view of the suburb as it had been in Queen Anne's reign, had been built alongside the paddock of a great city mansion, and were sheltered in front by the towering umbrageous

elms of the avenues and alleys of its pleasance; but when the axe of the woodman had scared the Hamadryads, and the huge blank wall of a factory, at a distance of a couple of yards in front of their windows, obscured their view and obstructed their sunshine, the apartments, once cheerful and airy, became mere dungeons, and their consequent cheapness induced the needy to occupy some of them, while others were tenanted by a worse class, to whom their vicinity to a labyrinth of alleys, relics of the garden-paths of open spaces now built over, and their situation on the border of the city and county, afforded a prospect of immunity for crime.

At last poor Mrs. Coffin became so weak that she was removed to a hospital, and there, with no one to bid her farewell save her child—for her father was dead, and her mother, always much more inveterate against her than he, had gone to a very distant part of the country—she died, and was buried at the expense of the parish.

The girl Emily thenceforth became in a measure my charge, and as I felt that there was some risk involved in placing her suitably, I tried her in my own house, on her leaving school, as an under-nursery-maid. Poor thing! she was what in common parlance is known as a 'handful,' a sharp, black-eyed little imp, with a Topsy-like propensity

for contradiction and mischief, as well as a determined spirit of antagonism to authority, represented by the stout respectability of the upper nurse, who complained of her incessantly. In short, 'a state of siege' was always prevailing in the domain of the nursery, and my interference was perpetually being invoked to remonstrate with the rebel, and if possible ameliorate the chronic warfare. The little delinquent was easily moved to tears, and, though sometimes sulky and argumentative, generally hauled down the flag of mutiny at once, and grew profuse in promises of amendment.

At length, however, the tension became so acute that my wife was obliged to intervene, and to procure for Emily a situation to wait upon a lady engaged in literary work, where we thought that her escapades would be of less moment, and her love of reading, which she was developing to an extent quite incompatible with her duties to our children, might be gratified without scruple, as books and newspapers were the be-all and end-all of her new patroness's existence. For a time this change seemed to work very satisfactorily, but in a year or two sinister rumours of dissatisfaction reached us, and one day the damsel herself, now about sixteen years of age, arrived to inform me that she had made up her mind that she would be a 'menial' no longer. I did my

very best to explain to her that the word 'menial' itself, which she had used, showed that there was no degradation in becoming the member of a household ; but she persisted in her determination, and at last I elicited that she was desirous of joining some intending emigrants to South Africa whose acquaintance she had made—though the capacity in which she was to accompany them appeared to me to be as menial as that which she had left.

As this resolution, however, promised to bring about her mother's desire of a permanent separation from her father, I could hardly venture to combat it, and we bade her farewell with some regret, not only for her mother's sake, but from something lovable after all in her wayward disposition—though, at the same time, with that sense of relief which everyone must experience who is quit of a somewhat dangerous or irregular charge.

For full ten years after these incidents my memory of the scout's boy was kept constantly green by the frequent chronicle in the periodical press of the rise and progress of the successful demagogue Mr. Joel Crumbs—'Candid Joe' his admirers christened him, not, we may be sure, with any rite of human or Divine law, but rather with the ceremonies of a witches' Sabbath, wild orgies of criminal excess and license. His candour was of this consistency. He

would speak and print the most foul and nauseous abuse of any to whom he happened to be opposed, decking his imaginary evildoer in colours of the blackest malice and most jaundiced bile. If he were, as sometimes happened, challenged and brought to book, he had two methods of facing the difficulty—the first, a grudging retraction, compiled in the style of the midshipman's withdrawal of the allegation that a shipmate was not fit to carry off to a bear, by substituting the affirmative for the negative. For instance, if he had accused Messrs. Blank of deducting 10 per cent. from the wages of their work-people, and that firm had proved the statement untrue, and called for an apology, it would appear couched in some such terms as these: 'Messrs. Blank require us to retract our statement that they mulct their employés to the tune of 10 per cent. Not having access to the books of Messrs. Blank, we find it impossible to fix the exact figure at which the deductions from Messrs. Blank's work-people should be estimated, so that we have no alternative but to withdraw our statement.'

If this sort of paragraph failed to satisfy the complainant, or if Mr. Crumbs's newspaper found it had gone too far, he simply let his victim take legal proceedings, and went through the Bankruptcy Court for the costs.

Nevertheless, such is the demoralizing effects of party and polemical zeal, that men of this stamp not only are the oracles of that congeries of ignorance and prejudice yeleft the masses—the stolid dough of the national pudding deprived of all those ingredients which give it flavour and wholesomeness—but are quoted and upheld by a much more intelligent section of politicians, who think their way to power is to be won after the fashion of Columbus's puzzle with the egg, by endeavouring to make the pyramid of the State stand inverted, base uppermost. They are pampered, too, by certain sacerdotal enthusiasts, men who think more of the Seven Sacraments than of the Ten Commandments, who would imitate the foolish Stuart Sovereign and sacrifice a monarchy for a Mass.

These varied sources of encouragement all tended to make Joel Crumbs a word of power among the denizens of the workmen's quarters in the East and South of London—an infallible oracle from whose utterances no appeal was possible, possessing all the dangerous power of Cleon, untempered by the epigrams of the Greek satirist. It is not one of the least of our latter-day dangers that an Aristophanes is an impossibility, the genus having disappeared with the utter decadence of that cultivated spirit to which the *ensor morum* in Athens and Rome could

appeal. Addison, if he were living now, would be relegated to the *Morning Advertiser*.

So Joel waxed fat, and kicked over the traces in every direction, while the car of Juggernaut, to which he contributed no inconsiderable share of momentum, ruthlessly ground women and children to the dust. A great strike, which means to the nation at large a loss in capital and trade to be counted by millions, which means to the wife and family of many an enforced idler cold and famine, means to the clique of which Crumbs was a leader cash and pleasure, entrées and champagne at mayoral luncheons, and an anticipation of the Utopia (limited) of the professional politician—payment of members of Parliament. Solid pudding, not empty praise. Having reduced our British electoral currency to the lowest denomination, the reckoning brings no advantage except to the tables of the money-changers, the chaffering varlets who translate the brazen coin of Petticoat Lane into grandiloquent promises to pay. Mr. Crumbs began to have his own private Court circular in the lower stratum of the daily press, and played the open-handed friend of the people out of the people's own hard earnings.

It was while his career was at its full zenith that I fancied I noticed more than once at the Westminster Bridge Station of the Metropolitan Railway, where

I was in the habit of regaining the upper air after visiting friends in South Kensington, a female figure standing in a nook near the passage which leads to the Houses of Parliament, as if on the look-out for someone; and one evening in particular, when the woman had emerged a little from the obscurity of the usual corner, she gave an unmistakable start of recognition as I passed.

I am afraid that I cannot boast of any disposition for adventure, so that the hasty glimpse I had obtained of the figure, from which I had come to the conclusion that she belonged to that most distressful class whose presence in our streets is London's lasting shame, led me to avoid an accostal which could only lead to future embarrassment, and, with the cautious (or cowardly) policy of the priest and the Levite at Jericho, I passed by on the other side.

The next moment, however, I heard a light, quick step behind me, and a hurried voice exclaiming:

'You must not run away from me. I am Emily Coffin.'

I could not suppress an exclamation of surprise as I turned round and confronted my former charge, now a well-developed young woman of middle height, possessing striking and piquant rather than regular features, the best part of her face being the fine dark eyes, lit up with excitement, and flashing out the

devious, roving glance of professed Bohemianism. I instinctively uttered a word of pitying remonstrance, which it was impossible to suppress; but while it did not evoke, as I expected, either anger or emotion—for, to do the wild girl justice, gratitude to an old friend was still prominent in her irregular mind—I was almost stunned by a torrent of excited declamation, so voluble that, were I to attempt anything like a detailed report of her talk, it would resemble the ravings of insanity; and, in truth, a want of mental balance perceptibly prompted many of her utterances.

That I should have supposed for a moment that she was a common girl of the streets was her first indignant complaint. What sort of life she led at home was no business of anybody's, but her own. Suppose that she did allow her gentlemen friends to visit her there, there were plenty of dames of high position in Court circles and Primrose Leagues who were just as bad; but she was no mercenary courtesan—no, she was simply emancipated from the false conventional trammels which parsons and peers had joined in imposing on the people under the name of religion, and when her father's party got the upper hand, there would be a day of reckoning with the tyrants in Church and State. Thus indignantly brushing away any proffered sympathy, she pro-

ceeded to boast of her successful efforts in the cause she had espoused.

'The mutiny at the Blenheim Barracks was my doing,' she said—'at least, I put the women up to it, and they soon made the soldiers disaffected. You will see in a few days the police in revolt, for I have got the Home Secretary into a pretty mess with the girls in the Strand, and the bobbies will be forced to strike. Do you know how we won the New Cut election? I passed the word down the *pavé* that Mr. Columbus, your Tory candidate, had a father and mother in Truro Workhouse, and they believed it!'

'But how do you live?' said I; 'and where do you get the money that this'—I prudently suppressed the word—'must cost?'

'Money indeed!' was her indignant reply. 'Do you suppose that the Committee of the Modern Mountain Club or the Radical members of Parliament would let *me* want money? I am going down the Embankment to draw £5 now, and I could have ten times as much if I asked for it. It makes me laugh sometimes to think of these fat-headed old fools, who only want to get a Sir or a Lord tacked to their names, finding us the money to pull their own class down. We shall not spare them one bit the more when the revolution comes. "Down with the capitalist!" my father says. But

I will not forget you in the general crash, for you were kind to my poor mother. You remember the story in the Bible about the red thread in Rahab's window. You may be glad of a shelter in Emily Coffin's house, I can tell you, when the sack begins. *Vive l'Anarchie!* There's no middle course.'

Such talk as this, random and hysterical as it was, appeared to me to be distinctly alarming; and I repeated it to a friend in Scotland Yard, from whom I hoped to obtain some information as to its real significance. I found that Emily Coffin's position and tactics were well known to the officials, although they had no idea of her exact position in reference to the agitator Crumbs, and they were much astonished to find that she was his daughter. She was, however, in their opinion, really the kind of agent of sedition which she professed to be, and had no lack of money at command—how obtained they could not venture to say—and was in constant communication not only with her father, but with other prominent Radical politicians. My friend the inspector seemed also well aware of the mischief which the class of women through whom Emily Coffin worked were constantly hatching, and that the police themselves were marked out for the next area of their machinations. With all that splendid official stolidity of confidence which gets the country into so many scrapes, and then gets us

out of them by that absolute refusal to own himself beaten which is the backbone of a British public servant, he confidently assured me that the crisis was by no means dangerous; that at any moment drink or whim might remove the principal agent, and that the peccant atoms would sink to the dust again after the little whirlwind had subsided.

I saw the girl once more in the course of the same summer. She had been sharp enough to detect me in changing my route from South Kensington to Whitehall, and reproached me with avoiding her.

‘Why should you be ashamed of being seen speaking to me?’ she asked. ‘I have spoken to greater people than you are, often I have spoken to the Prime Minister himself——’

I tried on this occasion, but in vain, to open her eyes to the risk she was running in linking her fortunes to those of such a man as her father. She would not listen to a word in his disparagement; and even a recital of her mother’s wrongs and dying protest was of no avail—her poor mother was, after all, only a parson’s daughter, she maintained, brought up in narrow prejudice—she never could have appreciated her father: and then she wandered off in a flood of ‘wild and whirring words’ of a Shelley complexion, delivered with such excitable fluency that I was thankful to make my escape.

That winter I did not see her while in London, but in the course of the following season she again encountered me very near to the spot where we had originally met, and I was deeply shocked at the ravages which a twelvemonth had made in her appearance and demeanour. It was not only that her dress was gaudier and more shabby, her manner more aggressive and importunate, but her sunken cheeks, dried and bloodless lips, and deep-sunk eyes, dull save when lurid gleams of passion lit them up, indicated that the frame was being rapidly consumed by the fiery energy within.

If her conversation on former occasions had been startling, it was tenfold as much on the evening of which I am now speaking. She actually raved ; but the subject of her furious denunciation now was her father. The worst man living, she shrieked ; and certainly, if half the shocking accusations she launched in her frenzy against him were true, which I should be sorry to think they were, he well deserved the epithet. He had ruined her, body and soul ; cast her off ; given her a bad name. Yes, I had been right in warning her against him. But she would never allow him to trample upon her without a struggle. No doubt, if he could get her put out of the way, he would ; but she knew too much about him, and if he would not do her justice she would expose him.

To play the peacemaker was a task beyond my powers ; but I contrived to persuade her to take a card of recommendation to a benevolent physician of my acquaintance, well skilled in nervous and mental diseases, who was associated with a house of refuge for women of the class to which she evidently belonged, or into which she was rapidly drifting. In the course of a few days my medical friend wrote to inform me that he had seen the patient, and satisfied himself that her form of excitement was not that resulting from alcohol, but from the use of opium ; that both her mental and bodily condition were suffering most severely from this pernicious habit, which not only lowered her physical stamina, but increased the tension of the brain. In the hope, therefore, of promoting her recovery, he had induced her to enter Miss French's home, where she would have the advantages of wholesome tranquillity and restraint, and he hoped shortly to send me a better report.

On the day but one after I received this letter, I took up my morning paper in the usual quidnunc spirit of the lounge, a state of mind speedily exchanged for excited interest as my eye encountered the heading of a paragraph :

'TRAGICAL EVENT IN LAMBETH.

'DEATH OF MR. JOEL CRUMBS, C.C.

'Last evening a melancholy and mysterious affair took place in the Westminster Bridge Road, close to the terminus of the tramways there. Between eight and nine o'clock the attention of the bystanders was attracted by the violent gesticulations of a young female, who was apparently engaged in an altercation with a man of respectable exterior. In spite of the attempts of the latter, who was subsequently recognised as Mr. Joel Crumbs, County Councillor and Parliamentary candidate for the New Cut Division of Lambeth, to soothe the individual who was thus excitedly addressing him, she grew more violent, and at length made a dash at him as if to seize him by the throat. In pushing her off, she fell under a passing tram-car ; but as she had a tight grasp of his clothing, and he had caught her wrist, with a view, no doubt, of saving her from the dangerous position in which she was placed, he was also dragged to the ground, and was killed on the spot by the wheel passing over the vertebræ of the neck. The young woman was picked up from under the tramcar also, still alive, but so terribly injured that she was com-

pletely insensible, and expired in a very short time after her removal to the accident ward of St. Thomas's Hospital. Her body has since been identified as that of a young woman who went by the name of Emily Coffin, well known in the Westminster Bridge Road, and from documents found upon her, it would appear that she had recently been an inmate of a refuge for inebriates.'

An inquest was held, with the usual result of such investigations. The coroner had made up his mind that Crumbs had fallen a victim to his own heroic conduct, and the witnesses contradicted each other as impartially as those friends of Raleigh's whose narratives of the incident which he had seen with his own eyes from his prison window caused him to burn his continuation of the 'History of the World,' in his conviction of the impossibility of obtaining trustworthy testimony to any fact. The verdict of the jury, practically dictated by the coroner, was 'Accidental death,' coupled with a tribute of praise to the gallant man who had lost his own life in the endeavour to save that of another.

In Kensal Green Cemetery there is a showy marble monument to Joel Crumbs, C.C., etc., with a long inscription, ending with these words: 'He died, as he lived, in the service of suffering humanity.' I

always think of the verse in Southey's ballad, 'The Cross-Roads,' where the old man says :

' There's one who in the churchyard lies,
For whom the bell did toll ;
He lies in consecrated ground,
But for all the wealth in Bristol Town
I would not be with his soul.'



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